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ABSTRACT

School-based management (SBM), the decentralization of decision-making authority to the school site, comes in many variations. However, all forms of SBM require a rethinking of how and where budgeting, curriculum, and personnel decisions are made. This bulletin provides an overview of what SBM is and how it is implemented by summarizing some of the educational research in this area. Throughout, examples are provided from Oregon schools, particularly the Salem-Keizer Public Schools, which implemented SBM in 1989. Interviews with 14 administrators and educators supplement the literature review. Chapter 1 provides definitions and an overview of SBM philosophy, with a list of advantages and disadvantages. Chapter 2 explains the change in roles and responsibilities of the "stakeholders": the school board, superintendent and district office, principal, teachers, parents and community members, and students. In each section, a list of concerns about the role transition is included. Strategies for enlisting stakeholder involvement in the successful implementation of SBM are discussed in the third chapter. Chapter 4 explains the function of the school council, with particular attention to Oregon site-based councils. The fifth chapter lists additional implementation guidelines, focusing on budget, personnel, and curriculum. Chapter 6 discusses issues related to and methods of determining SBM success. Finally, recommendations and conclusions are made in the seventh chapter. A four-page condensation of the Bulletin is included. (LMI)

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SCHOOL-BASED MANAGEMENT

Rationale and Implementation Guidelines

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Lori Jo Oswald

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March 1995 • Volume 38, Number 7

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Preface

Turning decision-making authority over to those who work closest with students is a strong movement in education these days. School-based management (SBM) requires a rethinking of how and where budgeting, curriculum, and personnel decisions are made. Combined with instructional innovation in the classroom, SBM's proponents say, shared decision-making can lead to happier school employees, a community atmosphere in the school, and improved student achievement.

This issue of the OSSC Bulletin was cooperatively prepared by OSSC and the ERIC Clearinghouse on Educational Management (ERIC/CEM) at the University of Oregon. It provides an overview of what SBM is, what the various roles and responsibilities of participants are in an SBM system, and how SBM is best implemented. Examples of Oregon school districts that have successfully accomplished the shift to SBM give the Bulletin a practical emphasis.

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Introduction

School-based management (SBM) means the decentralization of decision-making authority. Although this decentralization is generally defined as moving from the district level to the individual school, there are many variations of SBM. Authority can transfer from school boards to superintendents, from superintendents to principals, and from principals to other members of the school community such as teachers and parents. In SBM, decision-making moves "from a top-down approach to a bottom-up approach" (Carol Midgley and Stewart Wood 1993).

In most SBM systems, the district's role is as facilitator rather than dictator. The administration and school board formulate and define the district's general policies and educational objectives, while the local schools have control over budget, curriculum, and personnel. Not only do the individuals' roles change in SBM, but more emphasis is placed on group decision-making, through the formation of site-based councils or teams.

This Bulletin provides an overview of what SBM is and how it is implemented by summarizing some of the educational research in this area. Throughout, examples are provided from Oregon schools, particularly the Salem-Keizer Public Schools, which implemented SBM in 1989.

Chapter 1 provides definitions and an overview of SBM philosophy, with a list of advantages and disadvantages. Chapter 2 explains the change in roles and responsibilities of the "stakeholders": the school board, superintendent and district office, principal, teachers, parents and community members, and students. In each section, a list of concerns about the role shift is included.

Chapter 3 discusses how to enlist the involvement of the stakeholders to implement SBM successfully. Chapter 4 explains the function of the school council, with particular attention to Oregon site-based councils. Chapter 5 lists additional implementation guidelines, focusing on budget, personnel, and curriculum. Chapter 6 discusses issues related to and methods of determining SBM success. Finally, recommendations and conclusions are found in chapter 7.

Chapter 1

What Is School-Based Management?

First embraced by the business world, concepts such as decentralized management and shared decision-making began to be applied in schools when educators and researchers detected growing dissatisfaction with the pattern of governance that centralizes authority in the district office. As John Naisbitt points out in *Megatrends*, "People whose lives are affected by a decision must be part of the process of arriving at that decision."

Many educators and researchers believe, as William H. Clune and Paula A. White express, "the closer a decision is made to a student served by the decision, the better it is likely to serve the student" (1988). Therefore, SBM—also referred to as site-based management, shared governance, autonomous school concept, and participative decision-making—is now viewed by many educators as a viable alternative to a more centralized system. Priscillia Wohlstetter explains, "There are efficiency reasons for using school-based management. People at the school site know the students the best" (interview, January 26, 1995).

Although SBM has existed in one form or another in many schools for at least two decades, it wasn't until the mid to late 1980s that SBM was developed as a formally structured management style (Jane L. David 1989). SBM caught on quickly, and many schools have now implemented it in various forms. "Of all the reform movements of this era, none has received as much attention as school-based management," writes Joseph Murphy (1994). Ernest Boyer, past president of the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, observes, "In shaping a national strategy for education, school-based management is crucial" (in John C. Prasch 1990).

The Search for a Definition

John C. Prasch cautions against attaching a rigid definition to the term *school-based management*: "In deference to the flexibility inherent in SBM, I purposely avoid a tight definition of the term. It is more practical and more useful if allowed different meanings for different school districts." Other authors (Barbara J. Hansen and Carl L. Marburger 1989, John Lindelow and James Heynderickx 1989, Clune and White 1988, James E. Berry 1993) conceptualize SBM as a continuing process that is shaped and reshaped by the conditions specific to each school building. The very concept of SBM, says Prasch, encourages variability.

The educational community has widely accepted Lindelow and Heynderickx's definition of SBM as "a system of administration in which the school is the primary unit of educational decision-making," where key areas of decision-making are budget, curriculum, and personnel. It is argued that decentralizing authority in these key areas facilitates communication among people who are in the best position to make decisions—principals and teachers, with input from parents, community members, and students.

In SBM, says Carl Marburger (1985), *all* those involved with a particular local school will participate in making decisions. While this alternative form of school governance provides the principal with increased responsibility and authority, it also gives parents and teachers the right to participate in important school decisions.

The Rationale: Theory of SBM

Hansen and Marburger identify the following beliefs as the driving force behind SBM:

- People can be trusted. Those interested in and responsible for the education of children hold the welfare of those children in high regard.
- People are more likely to change when they have a voice in what those changes will be.
- Those who are closest to where implementation will occur are in the best position to decide how implementation should take place.
- Without bureaucratic interference, decisions are made more swiftly at the local level, and involving those affected brings more rapid and complete implementation of solutions.
- It is easier to change people's behavior than to alter their beliefs. If the structure of an organization is changed so that risk-taking and innovation are encouraged, people will behave accordingly.
- When people work together on common concerns, they lose the sense of being in separate camps.

- The resources for change and improvement are already in the school community. All we must do is release the energy that is now constrained.
- Parents are important contributors to the educational success of their children.
- Involving students in decision-making gives them an opportunity to become responsible members of a democratic society. (Barbara J. Hansen and Carl L. Marburger 1988)

As Donald E. Beers (1984) says, "SBM recognizes that participation in decision-making creates ownership and therefore leads to a more positive attitude towards the organization."

Types of Decentralization

In SBM, decentralization can be achieved without totally shifting overall control away from the central office. Based on the programs and practices of SBM in different school districts over the past two decades, Clune and White developed four categories of SBM program models. First are comprehensive SBM programs that decentralize decisions in three areas: budgeting, curriculum, and personnel. The second category of programs decentralize only budgeting and staffing. Curriculum decisions are centralized at the district level.

In the third category, only the budget is decentralized. Personnel and curriculum decisions remain centralized. Finally, some programs contain "elements of decentralized management with no structured decentralization." These districts "provide some flexibility in the three areas of budget, curriculum and staffing, but have not developed a structured SBM program," Clune and White say. Although the school staff may provide recommendations, they do not have complete autonomy in any of these areas.

The Distribution of Authority in Schools Practicing SBM

The distribution of authority—and accountability—is crucial for any SBM program. How this is accomplished, however, varies. SBM plans range from giving all authority to the principal (with "participation" of other members encouraged but not required) to distributing dominant authority to teachers, parents, and community members of a site council (or team).

According to Betty Malen and colleagues (1989), three typical patterns of control exist at the site level. Some SBM teams are "responsible for peripheral issues only" or advise or endorse decisions the principal has already made. In another set of SBM plans, the principal exerts overt or

informal control over a principal/staff council. And then there are plans where the council has decision-making authority, while the traditional roles of principal as policy-maker and teacher as instructor are maintained.

Malen and colleagues (1989) favor the distribution of authority at the school site so that the authority does not reside with the principal alone:

> If the goal of school-based management is to maximize the potential of a school community to improve learning outcomes for its students, then the authority delegated to the school site cannot reside with the principal alone. The greatest possible distribution of authority at the school site is required. Site authority must be shared.

At North Salem High School (Oregon), "curriculum, priorities for financing, who is hired, and support of the faculty are managed together by the staff and the principal," said Principal Judy Patterson, who added, "I believe that to be successful the faculty needs to have ownership." At Richmond Elementary School in the Salem-Keizer district, Principal Kathleen Bebe believes the strength and motivation to try new programs come from the teachers. The teachers interviewed agree that under the leadership of the principal, they feel sufficiently free and secure to experiment and be creative.

Paula A. White (1989), in her discussion of SBM authority structure, says, "The purpose of SBM is not simply to reorganize administrative responsibilities, but to make changes in traditional structures of authority, with new relationships among teachers, administrators, parents, and students."

Advantages of SBM

Proponents of SBM argue that it may accomplish the following:

- facilitate the development of positive teacher attitudes toward school leaders
- increase teacher commitment to school goals and objectives, thereby increasing teacher morale and reducing absenteeism and turnover
- have a positive effect on the relationship among schools, parents, and community members because involvement tends to strengthen public confidence in schools
- provide better programs for students because resources will be available to directly match student needs
- ensure "higher quality" decisions because they are made by groups instead of individuals
- clarify organizational goals
- support staff creativity and innovation
- generate public confidence

- focus accountability for decisions
- bring both financial and instructional resources in line with the instructional goals developed in each school
- nurture and stimulate new leaders at all levels
- increase both quantity and quality of communication

A number of proponents argue that SBM also has the potential to improve student achievement. Theoretically, through a formally structured yet flexible SBM system, schools will become more adept at matching available resources with students' educational needs. This, however, is a question still at issue. Some insist that SBM has no effect on student academic achievement; some say it is too soon to tell; and others say that since the purpose of SBM is to change the roles of participants, the question of its effect on achievement is irrelevant.

Some Reservations

Despite the potential strengths of SBM, reservations have been expressed by those unconvinced of its viability. Several objections are commonly stated:

- Teachers have no expertise in making decisions beyond the classroom.
- Teachers do not want to assume responsibility for decision-making in areas other than classroom instruction.
- Leadership can be exercised only at the central level, not precluding the principal.
- Power sharing can lessen the influence and authority of the principal.
- The community is best served when some uniformity is maintained through centralized decision-making in all educational matters.
- SBM will increase the disparity among schools within a school district.
- SBM will eliminate the need for central-office administrators.
- SBM will eliminate the need for building principals.

Prasch lists the following disadvantages of SBM: more work, less efficiency, diluted benefits of specialization, uneven school performance, greater need for staff development, possible confusion about new roles and responsibilities, coordination difficulties, unintended consequences, and irreversible shifts.

Barriers to SBM

Adopting a new approach to managing schools is never easy. Barriers are frequently encountered when districts attempt to move from a more centralized form of management to an SBM system. The following items are summarized from Hansen and Marburger (1988), Prasch, and Sue E. Mutchler and Patricia C. Duttweiler (1990):

- Some administrators and teachers are reluctant to allow others, especially students and parents, to have a role in planning and decision-making in areas traditionally considered their domain.
- Stakeholders do not have the training necessary to conduct planning and decision-making activities in a broad-based, collaborative manner. Also, the lack of knowledge, decision-making skills, and trust among stakeholders can be a problem.
- Some powerful groups or individuals in the community may prefer to influence the school's operation by hidden agendas and behind-the-scene activities.
- Some individuals may not be willing to devote the time that will be required to produce high-quality, comprehensive plans; schools and districts might have inappropriate staffing to handle the change to SBM.
- Certain statutes and regulations restrict the ability of site councils to make appropriate decisions.
- Union contracts may restrict the time teachers can spend on activities outside their classrooms, including training, and teachers' unions may object to the involvement of others.
- Some schools lack control over their budgets.
- Insufficient administrative and leadership support prevents SBM from working. An unstable school leadership can also be a barrier to SBM.
- Teachers may not be involved in and committed to the process.
- Few models exist (at least locally) on which to pattern school efforts.
- Too little time is allowed for the process to succeed (researchers recommend a minimum commitment to SBM of anywhere from three to fifteen years).
- Stakeholders may misunderstand their new roles and responsibilities, and some staff members may resist changing roles and responsibilities and change in general.
- Existing state and local laws can impede change.
- Finally, lack of clarity regarding what SBM is and why it is being implemented is a common barrier.

The aim of this Bulletin is to provide information on effective strategies for implementing SBM, so that readers will know how best to address and overcome these barriers.

Chapter 2

From Theory to Practice: Roles and Responsibilities in SBM

Both the district and the schools have distinctive roles to perform in an SBM system, and only when they work collaboratively can SBM be truly successful. Decision-making authority must be proportionately distributed among the stakeholders: school board members, superintendents and other district officials, principals, teachers, parents, and community members. Some also feel student participation is essential, particularly in high schools.

Unless stakeholders are empowered with authority, SBM will be restricted to the realm of theory, not practice. The distribution of authority is crucial, but how power is distributed is for each school district to decide. As this chapter makes clear, there are many forms of SBM and at least as many opinions about stakeholders' roles and responsibilities. As David Campbell, superintendent of the Clackamas (Oregon) Education Service District, explained,

> People can become so engrossed in doing SBM by the rules that they forget that SBM is not about how you do it but how to help children. The real end of SBM is to improve the school climate and school ownership so that the long-term results will help children's education.
>
> Defining roles too precisely can make SBM a fad that doesn't help anything. Situational leadership is essential in an SBM system: What the question is contextually determines who makes the decision. There must be flexibility.

As an example of flexibility in decision-making, Campbell said that a decision about combining second and third grades in one classroom might be made by a site council with final approval by a principal, while a decision to

build a new high school will have "a much broader base of input than the council, such as the school board and the community. It needs to be very clear what kinds of decisions should be made at each level."

The purpose of this chapter is to provide general findings and guidelines regarding the distribution of authority. However, since the application of SBM and the distribution of authority can differ from school to school and district to district, there are no "hard and fast" rules. Also included in this chapter are difficulties expressed or encountered by each group of stakeholders.

The School Board

The school board's duties do not change significantly in an SBM system, write Lindelow and Heynderickx: The board sets "general direction for the district by providing goals and policy statements, keep[s] informed about the district's progress toward new goals, and act[s] as a decision-maker of last resort." Only the boards that have direct involvement in school operations, such as specifying the types of equipment allocated to each school, will have to change.

Roles

Proponents of SBM have highlighted "trust" and "patience" as key ingredients of successful leadership by the school board. In SBM, board members function as visionary leaders, guides, supervisors, and arbitrators.

In a study of Edmonton Public Schools in Alberta and Langley School District in British Columbia, Daniel Brown (1987) found that when SBM was instituted, the role of the school board changed from "providing exact solutions for specific school problems" to that of "policy making." The board no longer makes rules for schools to follow. It "now moves directionally as opposed to exactly.... [Its] concern is not with schools doing things right but with schools doing the right things," Brown observes.

The board's roles, according to Brown and to Sarah D. Caldwell and Fred H. Wood (1988), are as follows:

- setting and revising policies to promote and support SBM
- handling negotiations
- allocating overall funds
- establishing a climate supportive of SBM
- determining district priorities
- monitoring the SBM program's success

- interfacing with senior governments
- serving as public advocates for SBM

The board's challenge in SBM is to "find ways to assist schools and guarantee uniformly high quality in a school system whose basic premise is variety, not uniformity" (Paul T. Hill and others 1992). Along these lines, the Oregon School Boards Association advises board members to give unconditional support to superintendents, provide startup resources, receive training in shared decision-making, set clear expectations through policy, move resources (people and money) to schools, clearly define parameters, participate in and teach shared decision-making, show visible support to risk takers, and recognize and reward collaboration.

In Salem-Keizer, the school board and central administration are responsible for specifying the district's vision and goals, establishing measurable results, and instituting effective monitoring practices (District 24J Decision Making Work Team).

Control

Prasch states that the board's new role requires changing the way it exercises control over the district: "Instead of taking direct administrative action, [the board] must set policy, establish goals and monitor results." Since shared decision-making promotes diversity instead of standardized conformity, Prasch contends that the board must work as a coordinator and monitor results rather than processes.

Prasch adds another dimension to the role of the school board:

> The board must also accept a public relations role in celebrating the diversity among its schools and in championing the right of school sites to be different. Board policy must define roles and... be explicit with regard to the power and authority to be delegated and shared with parent councils and school staff.

By making a clear commitment to SBM, the board will assure the public that it is not always the board's role to fix problems, says Hill and colleagues:

> Concerns about lunch menus, school dismissal schedules, a teacher's competence, and methods of teaching bilingual education all arose during our study—and school board members were strongly tempted to resolve all of them. Refusing to do so on the basis of the board's commitment to decentralization takes political courage, but it is easier to do if the board and superintendent have thoroughly informed the public about their reform strategy.

Relationship with School Councils

Many of the individual school activities traditionally handled by the school board are transferred to the school council (a team of SBM decision-makers, including teachers, parents, and other community members). Questions have been raised about whether the SBM council's function as a mini-school board at each school may decrease the board's power and authority. However, in their study of districts across the U.S., Clune and White found that "the respondents did not feel that SBM councils presented a threat to school board authority"; instead the board "developed a new openness to listening to the needs of the individual schools."

Some Constraints

"Full and continuing support for SBM from members of the board of education may be one of the more difficult hurdles," writes Prasch. Board members may lose patience with SBM for any of a number of reasons. They may feel more comfortable with conventional management models, and more knowledgeable about bureaucratic arrangements. They were elected *to control*, so they must prevent their constituents from perceiving schools as chaotic or permissive; tight organizational models are therefore preferable to loose ones. Moreover, the public, they may reason, prefers simple, easy-to-understand organization. Finally, board members may feel their intervention is in the best interest of students. Prasch says boards often "overestimate the extent to which their decisions affect classroom behavior."

Another constraint to successful SBM implementation is the fluctuation of board membership, with new office seekers often promising to bring about change. "Given the long timespan necessary from successful installation and implementation to noticeable results," Prasch says, "continuity of leadership is a critical factor."

The National School Boards Association (NSBA) presents its policy on SBM in a report titled *Shared Decision Making*. NSBA contends that the board must oversee decisions because board members are held accountable through elections. "Anyone exercising decision-making authority within a school district must recognize that the school board will ultimately be held responsible for the results of the decisions regardless of who made them." SBM does not change the fact that legal authority for the school district continues to reside in the school board:

> School board members and their successors may be under significant pressure to recapture the delegated authority when the public is dissatisfied with decisions. Thus, all parties must recognize that shared decision-making arrangements, even when created by board policy, do not replace school boards. Groups to which decision-

making has been delegated do not have independent authority created by statute. They are accountable to the general public through the school board.

Unless the state legislature "gives authority directly to school site teams," the school board must regularly review and evaluate "the performance of those with decision authority," the NSBA states.

The Superintendent and the District Office

Although school-site autonomy is basic to SBM, this does not preclude some form of central control (or uniformity). The central office can still specify basic curriculum guidelines and insist that schools follow budget-allocation procedures. Concern about widening the disparities among schools through the practice of SBM can be tempered by developing effective instructional leadership in schools so that resources are successfully matched with the students' needs.

Traditionally, the district's chief business official has been responsible for three main functions: (1) maintaining tight fiscal control over school budgets, (2) providing technical assistance to the schools, and (3) monitoring district expenditures. In an SBM system, the principal and/or the site council takes over the first function, while the district continues to handle the other two. Prasch explains how this works in practice: Schools receive an annual budget from the school district based on the number of students and program needs. Then, the principal becomes "responsible for the requisition, management, distribution, and utilization of supplies within the building." The district's business officer is "responsible for the actual purchasing, warehousing, and distribution of supplies to buildings and for providing the necessary forms and establishing efficient procedures to facilitate the process."

The key word that describes the administration's role in SBM, then, is *facilitate*. Having delegated control over expenditures, curriculum, and personnel, district administrators now facilitate schools' actions by formulating and defining the district's general polices and educational objectives.

The superintendent and the district office also have a managerial function in providing support services and objective evaluations instead of "mandatory directives." In the words of one superintendent, "They facilitate, not dictate." Thus, their role changes from telling schools what to do to "helping schools accomplish what schools, themselves, decide to do" (Priscilla Wohlstetter and Kerri L. Briggs 1994).

The Superintendent's Roles

In SBM, the role of the superintendent has been much less publicized than that of the principal. Yet, the transference of decision-making power cannot be effective without the willingness of the superintendent to share power. In fact, according to Clune and White, "Because the superintendent is frequently instrumental in introducing SBM to a district, the manner in which he or she chooses to do this may influence both the organizational structure and the attitudes of the school community towards SBM." Lindelow and Heynderickx emphasize that "the superintendent will always be the chief administrator of the district and the one person responsible to the school board for administrative decisions."

If the above descriptions of the superintendent's role seem vague, it is because, as Jackie Kowalski and Arnold Oates (1993) explain, "The superintendent's role in school-based management is not operationalized by one definition or with a specific set of steps because school-based management is unique to each school and unique to each individual school district." What is certain, they say, is that under SBM, superintendents must have the following leadership skills:

1. *Instructional Leadership*: The instructional leader has the qualities of fairness, communication, visibility, high expectations, and a sense of priorities.

2. *Transformational Leadership*: Superintendents are people-oriented rather than task-oriented. They foster teacher development and a collaborative, professional school culture, help staff members solve problems together, delegate power to school campuses, actively communicate the district's cultural norms, and emphasize group discussion and decision-making.

3. *Visionary Leadership*: "Superintendents should learn to anticipate and envision a totally new system of education" and seek collaboration in the formation and implementation of the vision.

In addition, the superintendent must have the following characteristics, say Kowalski and Oates: good listening skills, trust-building skills, the ability to be a change agent, conflict-management skills, and risk-taking skills.

The District Office's Roles

Lindelow and Heynderickx say the central office's functions are developing student and staff performance standards, offering technical assistance to schools, and acting as the comptroller of district expenditures. Prasch lists the following as "essential functions" of the district office: purchasing equipment per school requisitions, warehousing and distributing supplies to buildings, and establishing the forms and procedures to facilitate the distribution of supplies.

Clarifying the distinct functions of the district office and of the school is essential. Any decision that applies externally, is centrally mandated, and is an extension of the building should pertain to the district office. Support services are the primary responsibility of the superintendent and the district office.

In an SBM system, the district office still has important duties. Depending on the type of SBM implemented, central-office personnel may handle any of the following functions:

- developing districtwide priorities
- developing educational objectives for students at each grade level
- developing curriculum to meet those educational objectives
- determining the district's educational budget
- supervising capital expenditures such as new construction and major repairs
- selecting textbooks
- selecting principals
- screening applicants for jobs, with the actual selection made at the building level
- translating board policy and priority goals into short- and long-range district plans for implementation
- providing data related to the district's major problems and goal areas identified by the board
- approving and monitoring school instructional programs
- evaluating all aspects of the district improvement operation
- providing staff development to accomplish the goals and objectives of approved school-improvement plans
- modeling the behaviors expected of principals and site councils
- developing staff-performance standards
- offering technical assistance to schools
- carrying out systemwide planning, monitoring, and evaluations
- establishing attendance zones and otherwise determining the composition of the student body
- defining the criteria for student success or failure with promotion standards, attendance requirements, and local graduation requirements
- setting the tone for the district and shaping the expectations and work norms of the staff

- conducting collective bargaining and contract enforcement
- establishing the length of the school day
- providing research data to the schools and the school board
- making recommendations regarding personnel selection, promotion, and dismissal
- raising and allocating revenue
- overseeing compliance with state and federal mandates
- coordinating busing and equipment purchase
- reporting to state and federal authorities
- providing districtwide programs, including special education
- providing the political support needed for schools to make their own decisions (and mistakes)
- monitoring quality control to ensure that schools are meeting district goals

Portland School District

The superintendent's role in the Portland School District (1994-95 enrollment 54,345) consists of giving direction to district schools in planning SBM, while the district office performs the following duties: providing support services to schools, such as busing, purchasing supplies and equipment, warehousing, coordinating activities for federal and state grants, discussing legal matters with groups of members and unions, and evaluating the programs and progress of schools.

In the areas of curriculum and instruction, the superintendent and the district office prescribe the use of standardized curriculum with a basal text for each grade, provide curricular guidelines, offer technical support services with training facilities for principals and teachers, and evaluate student performance by using standardized tests and visitations. In hiring personnel, the district office screens candidates and maintains applicant pools. In budgeting, the district office allocates funds based on per-pupil enrollment.

Salem-Keizer School District

In the Salem-Keizer School District (1994-95 enrollment 30,930), decentralized management was initiated by Superintendent Homer Kearns in 1989, when he revamped the entire structure of district administration from the central office down to the school level to suit the needs of SBM. The role he has defined for himself is coordinator, or one who facilitates, supervises, guides, and delegates. Kearns explained, "I believe that if student achievement is to be improved, the people who make the changes must be directly

connected to the classroom." At the district level, Kearns created two main divisions that provide services to the schools—support and instruction. The support component provides services such as busing, providing payroll and a districtwide budget, arranging office equipment and materials, and warehousing and delivering supplies.

On the instructional side, the superintendent eliminated five top positions and created five Area Offices, each headed by a director. The directors' duties include matching school performances with the district's mission and goals and providing need-based assistance, such as discretionary funds or professional guidance, to individual schools. McKay Area Operations Director Winston Miller explained the composition of the Area Offices:

> A teacher leader from each school is on the Area School Improvement Council, and that person acts as the communication link between the area and the individual school. The team also includes a School Improvement Program Assistant, housed in the Area Office, working with the area schools on school-improvement efforts, and the Area Director, who represents the district on the Executive Cabinet. The Area Offices monitor the work of each school's instructional-improvement efforts.

Miller said the emphasis is on attainment of the district's mission and goals, not on the strategies used to achieve the mission and goals. The Area Offices evaluate and assist schools, ensuring that the schools' activities match the district's mission and goals. "We think of our schools in geographical areas as a continuum, kindergarten through twelfth grade," said Miller. "We want to have what they are doing in the elementary grades match up with the activities in middle school and high school. The area council's function is to increase communication between schools and to ensure that each school makes progress toward meeting its own unique needs."

Role of the Area Offices

In the Salem-Keizer School District, the instructional component at the district level contributes to instructional improvement at the school sites by doing the following:

- offering technical and professional expertise
- arranging training facilities for the staff
- distributing discretionary funds on a need basis
- evaluating schools' compliance with the district's mission and goals
- coordinating school activities

The Area Office directors also guide schools in the formation of site councils when needed and ensure that all social groups and communities receive representation. Beyond that, the district has no obligations to the schools. Internal management of district schools rests with the respective schools. The schools are accountable to the board for meeting district goals. Kearns summed up the district-school relationship in Salem-Keizer:

> The model I used is easy. This is like one company with forty-eight branch offices. There is no question that Branch X out there can make some decisions about its own operations. If they deviate from what the district is trying to accomplish, then the central office will make some decisions on their behalf. I'll be happy to make the decisions for them if they don't do their job well.

The Principal

Since the basic component of SBM is participatory decision-making, a lot of attention focuses on the roles and responsibilities of the participating members such as teachers, parents, community members, and the principal. Studies show that at the building level, the principal is usually the key figure in SBM, through fostering shared governance within the school. "If principals didn't exist before school-based management, they'd have to be created to carry out the system," says an SBM task force member (AASA and others 1988). In SBM, principals not only have increased responsibility but also increased accountability.

According to Clune and White, the principal under SBM has more authority and responsibility in three areas: school programs, shared governance, and district decision-making. Wohlstetter and Briggs list the principal's "emerging roles" under SBM:

- designer/champion of involvement structures (by developing and empowering decision-making teams)
- motivator/manager of change (by encouraging staff development)
- liaison to the outside world (by bringing to the school new ideas and research about teaching and learning, for example)

In addition, the principal will, according to Caldwell and Wood, do the following:

- ensure the positive climate necessary for gaining commitment to school improvement decisions
- involve the staffs and those clientele served by the school in developing goals and program plans for improvement
- ensure that staff development programs designed for their staffs are related to their school improvement goals
- participate in staff development with their faculties
- ensure that the design of the school improvement plan addresses the major educational problems in their schools
- implement and evaluate school instructional improvement with their planning teams. (Sarah D. Caldwell and Fred H. Wood 1988)

Arlen Tieken of the Lincoln County School District (Oregon) noted that the principal's "biggest role may be as communicator with parents, staff, and students."

Principals as Managers

Management issues are an essential part of the principal's role under SBM. Principals are assuming greater responsibility in determining budget priorities, establishing staffing patterns, and developing educational program objectives. Additional managerial functions include personnel management; business management; facilities, maintenance, and property management; security; counseling; communication; and community relations.

In districts implementing SBM, schools must develop their own clearly set goals and monitor their activities to meet those goals in order to receive district funding. When teachers and community members are involved, principals must stress that their efforts are valued. In this context, the principal's skills in facilitating group processes, monitoring interpersonal communication, and building team spirit are important. The principal must act as manager, coordinator, facilitator, and delegator. To be a successful leader in an SBM program, the principal must have a vision to integrate all the activities into a meaningful whole.

The School's Role in SBM

The school's role (as opposed to the district's role), under the guidance of the principal, is listed by Hansen and Marburger (1988) as follows:

- establishes goals based on schoolwide assessments of need
- develops or chooses curricula
- determines instructional methods
- provides training for parents
- works in consort with other district schools to align curricula
- allocates school funds based on goals and needs
- determines numbers of staff and positions needed
- hires staff

Human-relations skills are vital, as is the ability to discern the aptitudes, areas of expertise, and interests of teachers and community members so as to delegate appropriate responsibilities to them. Above all, the principal should have enough influence to help everyone work together to attain goals.

Prasch summarizes the abilities principals must have in SBM programs:

- use human relations in dealing with personnel and public relations in dealing with the community
- understand group dynamics
- create a positive work environment

- analyze community needs
- distribute power through information sharing
- direct collaborative teamwork involving both classified and certificated staff
- manage "by exception," which means "playing the supervisory role only with the small percentage of staff members whose performance is marginal, and working with the rest of the staff as an equal partner in the search for more effective instructional techniques"

In short, says Prasch, "The principal's new role is to find ways to empower all staff members to maximize their contributions in successfully attaining the school's goals." Undoubtedly this requires trust, patience, and a firm belief in the positive outcomes of group involvement.

Problems with the Principal's Role

Principals are perhaps more concerned about the implementation of SBM in their schools than any other individuals or groups. A recent article in *Principal* warns its readers, "In the various SBM models now in place around the nation, the role of the building principal ranges from chairing the local council to being—for all practical purposes—a mere employee" (William R. Drury 1993). The article also quotes from reports that predict teachers will one day take over curriculum, budgets, schedules, and staffing decisions. "Proceed with caution" advises Drury to superintendents and school boards considering SBM, to avoid "losing principals as members of the management team, and having to face them in a more adversarial role typical of collective bargaining."

On the other hand, many principals have the opposite concern: too much authority and therefore accountability under SBM. Related concerns have to do with how the principal delegates some of that authority.

Resistance to Power Sharing. Although SBM usually vests principals with considerable autonomy to exercise democratic leadership, some principals are unwilling to extend their power base through delegation and collective decision-making to teachers, parents, and community members who sit on school-site councils. In such cases, even when the district mandates site councils in all schools, principals can undermine the authority of the councils.

A reason for such resistance to power sharing is fear of losing authority and control (James E. Mitchell, January 1990). A second reason is that principals trained in an authoritarian style of management are unprepared to either accept the wisdom of cooperation or are not flexible enough to adapt themselves to the new style. Some principals wonder "Who exactly will be charge?" says Del Stover (1989).

Concerns About Forced SBM. Mitchell (January 1990) says "you shouldn't force people into a process that's time-consuming and demands they take on added responsibilities," so start slowly, with a pilot program. A principal of a Eugene elementary school is critical of the mandatory establishment of site-based councils, which he regards as a bureaucratic barrier between the staff and the principal. When the council represents only a few members of the staff, staff members' views do not get to the principal directly. This principal prefers to deal directly with the entire staff through staff meetings. Yet the existence of a site council should not prevent the principal from holding staff meetings as an effective means of communication with teachers.

Mistrust of Others' Motives. A nationwide survey found considerable mistrust among the administrative ranks about the motives of others in SBM (Robert W. Heller and others 1989). "No matter what your position in the administrative hierarchy, you are likely to consider yourself more supportive of school-based management than your colleagues in other administrative positions," say Heller and colleagues. Superintendents who support SBM might doubt the principals' commitment, and vice versa.

Increased Accountability. Some principals worry about the increased accountability that comes with SBM: According to Stover, "Many principals aren't thrilled at the idea of being held even more responsible for student achievement." Some of these concerns are valid, says Stover, and it is important that "a fair evaluation system" is established.

As a way of preventing some of these problems, better training and dialogue between district officials and principals at the outset may ease mistrust. Effective training programs build on past experiences, including mistakes.

Mitchell (January 1990) recommends hiring an outside consultant to train staff in "consensus building, group-process skills, and shared decision-making." Principals should be taught collaborative-management skills such as compromising and reaching consensus, forming new relationships, and building teams to facilitate change. Educating principals about what SBM is and letting them know councils usually have advisory roles, not outright control, can also help ease concerns (Stover).

Examples from Oregon Schools

Interviews conducted with Oregon school principals showed an enthusiastic acceptance of the principal's new roles and relationships under SBM. Below, three principals describe how they ensure decision-making is shared at their schools.

Richmond Elementary School

At Salem-Keizer's Richmond Elementary School, teachers consider "trust" and "expertise" the key factors in a principal's success. Trust is generated by the principal's expertise and commitment to the welfare of subordinates. This is evident in one teacher's comments about Principal Kathleen Bebe: "We trust her, we can turn to her whenever we want help, and we know she will never fail us."

Bebe said principals "must possess integrity, the ability to creatively organize teachers, and must model professional commitment." Communication, she believes, is an important dimension of her job:

> I devoted the very first staff meeting entirely to telling the staff about myself and what I believe in. What my background was, what my philosophy was, and what my expectations were, the teachers knew right away. I've noticed if you don't set up a picture right away of what your goals are, people start to guess. Instead of people second guessing, just say, "This is the way I am, this is the way I operate," and there are no hidden agendas, which are what cause staff insecurity.

To cultivate a sense of school ownership among the teachers, Bebe emphasizes staff involvement in school activities. To do this, the principal must be available and accessible to the teachers. Bebe meets informally with teachers almost every day—in classrooms, in the corridor, in other places where they are able to exchange information. She also sends memos to every teacher regarding all school events to keep them informed, and she tells the staff her whereabouts at all times during the day. Finally, Bebe always tries to follow through on things (such as projects that were started, expectations teachers had that a committee would be formed, and promises made to the staff), for "such integrity of actions helps to build confidence of the staff in the principal, increases staff morale, and motivates them to be committed as well to their own jobs."

However, teachers' motivation should, she believes, come from within and not be superimposed from outside: "This alone is the secret to successful implementation of SBM programs." Bebe explained what she means by motivation from within:

> Teachers are motivated to make changes in their own classroom, family, and school environments. The principal's role is to nurture and encourage and promote teachers, allowing teachers the freedom to express themselves. When you have a staff of sixty some people, there are an amazing number of creative ideas.

The principal's willingness to meet the needs of staff members and students alike is essential, she said. Through actions and deeds, the principal

should help create such a positive climate in the school that teachers feel free to experiment with new ideas and grow professionally. In such a climate, conflicts are rare, and, when they do occur, they are resolved mutually without the intervention of the principal. At Richmond, conflict has been relatively absent since Bebe took over.

Finally, Bebe said, the principal's ability to attract and involve parents and community members is also critical.

North Salem High School

In North Salem High School, Principal Judy Patterson described her role as facilitator—one who procures instructional, technical, and monetary assistance for program development—and "bridges student, staff, parent, community, and district concerns together." Like Bebe, Patterson stressed the importance of participative decision-making in successful school management.

South Eugene High School

South Eugene High School is particularly interesting because there are two principals: Lynne George and Chuck Vaughn. "What we have found," said George, "is that it's significant to have the same values about group process. How things are decided is at least as important as what is decided. Since we both value taking issues through the group process and how things should be decided, we don't have to serve on the same committees." The skills necessary for a successful coprincipalship are the same, said George, as in SBM. These include facilitation in groups and meetings, personal communication, and organization (having a clear sense of order).

Teachers

Teacher empowerment and accountability are major ingredients of SBM. Teachers influence decisions by participating in planning, developing, monitoring, and improving instructional programs within the school.

Teachers consistently have said they want a say in decisions that affect them (Carol H. Weiss 1993, Paula A. White 1992, Gail Thierbach Schneider 1984, Linda H. Bair 1992). Teachers have an interest in making decisions on budget allocation, curriculum, student discipline, and community interaction, as well as many other matters that directly or indirectly affect them. However, teachers do not want token participation. They want to play an active role in the decision-making process.

"While SBM has not required major changes in the roles and responsibilities of teachers," say Clune and White, "SBM has provided teachers with greater flexibility and opportunity to make changes." Teacher empowerment should be limited to instructional matters, Prasch asserts: "Teachers must be empowered to do what they do best, which is to teach students ... teachers must be served or ministered to by their principals and superintendents so that students have better learning opportunities."

Teachers' roles under SBM, as listed by Caldwell and Wood (1988), are to

- work collaboratively with other stakeholders to consider district and school priorities and to select goals
- help identify programs and practices necessary to achieve school goals
- assist in SBM implementation "by participating in staff development designed to help them achieve their goals".
- "conduct inservice for their peers"
- "help collect and interpret data" related to their goals
- "assist the principal in managing the resources to ensure their improvement plans are successful"

To participate in an SBM system, teachers may, says Prasch, need to expand their knowledge base in policy and procedural matters, group dynamics, large-scale issues affecting all schools, and research results regarding instructional improvement.

AREAS OF TEACHER DECISION-MAKING

A task force of administrators found that, under SBM, teachers "will participate in designing programs that meet the school's educational objectives" (AASA and others). Teachers' input will include decisions about

- school climate
- student attendance
- discipline policies
- selection of materials in accordance with district policy
- teaching methods and strategies
- staff development
- goal setting

Benefits of Teacher Involvement

According to Hansen and Marburger (1988), White (1992), and Caldwell and Wood (1992), the SBM philosophy of involving teachers may have the following benefits:

- higher morale
- increased commitment to the school and lower levels of absenteeism and turnover

- improved management decisions
- greater acceptance of change
- enhanced cooperation and reduced conflict
- more effective enforcement of discipline
- better informed teachers
- improved teacher communication with and across schools
- improved student motivation
- increased incentives that serve to attract and retain quality teachers
- improved school climate
- increased commitment to shared decision-making
- improved relationships between teachers and administrators

Teachers' Ambivalence

Clune and White found mixed feelings among teachers toward SBM. While some are enthusiastic about trying out new programs and innovations, others fear the uncertainty that accompanies changing roles, and still others question whether the time and effort are worthwhile. Mark A. Smylie (1992) says that "substantial evidence exists that participation in decision-making is related" not only to teacher job satisfaction, loyalty, and goal commitment, but also to "stress, militancy, role ambiguity and conflict, and work alienation."

Both teachers and administrators have additional administrative burdens under SBM, which often takes them "away from the central issue of schooling—learning and teaching" (Murphy). Some teachers suggest hiring additional teachers' aides to assume their duties while they are involved in SBM activities. Such a demand is not often met for want of funds, which leads to dampening of teacher interest in SBM programs.

According to Jim Sweeney (1993), teachers do not want to spend time participating in decision-making without seeing results: "Teachers place a higher premium on what happens after the decision is made than they do in providing input or sharing in decision-making."

Mitchell (February 1990) reports that in many schools teachers perceive the principal as a "blocker," particularly when there is little trust between the principal and the teachers. A power struggle may destroy staff morale and heighten tension in the school. Teachers also complained that principals often do not fully inform them about how they will be affected by SBM. This can cause confusion and reduce teachers' enthusiasm about getting involved.

Salem-Keizer School District

Area director Miller said that central-office personnel at Salem-Keizer believe strongly in the ability of teachers to assume a greater role in the decision-making process:

> Teachers are professional people and they do carry a great deal of expertise, particularly about instruction and about the children they work most closely with, and we think they are probably in a better position to make some instructional decisions and decisions about how things should be done in schools. They are probably in a better position than some of us who work at the central level.

Miller stressed the importance of trust, which is the foundation upon which the district's SBM program is built.

> We have trust in our teachers to make good decisions. One of the things we would like to see happen through this process is that teachers will work more collaboratively together, that there will be more sharing, and that sharing will be based on good, indepth information. We would like to encourage more experimentation. We would like the teachers to be able to try different approaches and know that they are being supported because what they are trying to do is in keeping with what our mission and goals are, and is based on the information they have.

Parents and Community Members

Involvement of parents is essential to successful implementation of SBM. The challenge is to determine how much decision-making authority parents should have. Too much leads to too much power with no accountability and too little erects a barrier to true community input. Hansen and Marburger (1988) point out that most parents "support what schools are trying to achieve, but have not been given opportunities to demonstrate it."

Community involvement can enhance public support for schools and make schools more responsive to community and student needs. Parents derive a sense of ownership through active involvement in local schools. In addition, SBM "has the potential to give families and communities access to the resources needed to participate in the real improvement of school programs," say Ameetha Palanki and colleagues (1992).

Ultimately, the argument for parent involvement rests on benefits to children. "Studies have shown that students get better grades, have better attitudes toward school and have high aspirations if parents are aware of what's happening in school and encourage their children," says Leon Lynn (1994). Hansen and Marburger (1988) present the following research findings related to parental involvement in school decision-making:

- Students who view their parents as supporting the school have higher self-esteem and more positive attitudes toward school.
- Parent involvement in their children's schools is directly related to student achievement.
- Parent satisfaction with schools is positively related to parent participation and influence in decision-making. (Barbara J. Hansen and Carl L. Marburger 1988)

Most principals and teachers in schools practicing SBM welcome parent involvement. But their opinions differ concerning the extent of parent involvement in decision-making. Some emphasize the importance of the principal's discretion in selecting appropriate matters for parents to have decision-making authority over. Although other leaders believe that parent members in councils should have equal power in decision-making, in reality, parents often have only token participatory powers. Ameetha Palanki and colleagues write that only a few states give "priority to involving parents in important planning, policy making, or decision-making roles." Overall, says David Peterson - del Mar (1993), "districts have not distributed substantial formal authority to parents or other community members."

Some principals believe that parents and other community members can be involved only in issues that are reasonably stable, such as policy matters. According to one principal, because some issues are particularly time sensitive, it is not possible to achieve total parent participation in all school issues. Those issues requiring immediate resolution generally get settled without the involvement of parents.

In Salem-Keizer, parent involvement is an important component of the SBM program. At the district level, parents and nonparents participate as committee members. On the instructional side, the Area Directors communicate with the Local School Advisory Committees, which are comprised exclusively of parents and community members.

The Salem-Keizer district office takes special care to ensure that parent and community members are adequately represented in school councils. McKay Area Operations Director Winston Miller's approach has been to secure representatives of all the social groups who have their interests at stake in the schools.

Parents seem to have more than a peripheral role on many Oregon school committees. They generate new ideas for monitoring community-support programs. They develop strategies to obtain additional community help in special school-initiated programs for disadvantaged kids. And they obtain resources for afterschool programs. Principal Ed John of Salem-Keizer's Hayesville Elementary School tries to involve community members during regular meetings with three goals in mind: to facilitate information

exchange, to enrich ideas pertaining to school activities, and to broaden the base of support for ongoing school activities.

Students

"Students are generally the least consulted of all the public school constituencies," write Hansen and Marburger (1988),

> yet they bring a special knowledge and skill to that which they are experiencing. Most school councils at the middle/junior high school and high school levels do involve students on their councils. An occasional elementary school will even involve students. Students are selected from existing student councils or on the recommendation of staff or as volunteers. We strongly recommend from the experiences of many councils that students be a part of the process.

SBM has "given students a greater sense of ownership regarding the school," say Clune and White. "Participation on SBM councils has given specific students a better understanding of the operations of the school and school decision-making." They also found better relations between students and teachers due to SBM, and students directly benefitted from programs and activities "geared specifically to their needs" since students had a means of shaping those activities.

Students who serve on SBM councils are often articulate and confident. Neverless, say Clune and White, "it is difficult for parents and teachers to learn to listen to students and for students to realize that parents and teachers will listen to them."

In Salem-Keizer, students are considered "primary customers" in relation to the site councils; they "provide a student perspective, participate in the improvement process as appropriate, contribute ideas, and continually remind everyone of the purpose of change" (District 24J). In the Portland School District, at least one student representative must serve on each high school council.

Lynne George, coprincipal of South Eugene High School, said, "The students are the very reason we're in school, and we need to be listening to their perceptions and thoughts on what they believe. Students who have been trained in meeting process and leadership skills are every bit as reliable and skilled as adults."

As this chapter makes clear, implementing SBM successfully requires the stakeholders to redefine their roles and responsibilites. The following chapter outlines the "nuts and bolts" of how to enlist the stakeholders' involvement.

Chapter 3

Troubleshooting: Enlisting Each Group's Involvement

Prior to implementation of SBM, all the affected groups should be involved in designing and understanding the implementation plans. A series of orientation sessions can be helpful in gaining the commitment of district staff, principals, teachers (or teacher leaders), parent and community members, and, if included on the site councils, students. This chapter spells out some strategies to provide training and to overcome barriers to SBM within each group.

School Boards

Prasch lists several techniques for obtaining the board's commitment to SBM:

- Hold board retreats for discussion of SBM. Consider using an outside facilitator. Use the time to establish district goals and orient new board members.
- Hold informal work sessions. "Retreats and work sessions are... better environments than regular meetings for discussing and evaluating the role of the board in the SBM program."
- "Target the dialogue" by using a tightly drawn agenda. The purpose is time efficiency. Prasch lists sample agenda questions: What are the reasons for changing? What purposes will change serve? How do educational institutions change? How do board members best facilitate change? What are the next steps? Who does that?
- Obtain reports from individual schools in order to understand building and staff differences and needs.
- Develop a strategic plan with a clear mission statement and clear goals.

• Emphasize the board's functions by using reinforcement and instruction. Some methods of doing this include controlling the agenda, periodically evaluating board functioning, and using experienced outside facilitators to observe and make recommendations.

• Consider creating a committee to monitor, evaluate, and adjust the SBM plan as it is installed.

Hansen and Marburger (1988) encourage the board to be supportive of the superintendent and to clarify the school-site councils' authority and relationship to the board. To accomplish the latter, the board should negotiate a "memorandum of agreement" contract that outlines the councils' authority. Will they make decisions or simply make recommendations?

Mitchell advises in "Share the Power" to commit the board to action, involve administrators early, seek outside expertise, visit other school systems that have implemented SBM, work closely with unions to educate personnel and persuade people to consider SBM with an open mind, be aware of time commitments, adopt appropriate policies, and start with a pilot program.

The Superintendent

"The district's superintendent of schools will make or break any school based improvement process," write Hansen and Marburger (1988). They insist that the superintendent must be willing to do the following for SBM to work:

- be willing to relinquish some authority in order to gain the power that comes from success
- convey to the board of education a feeling of trust and confidence in SBM
- convey to staff and parents the expectation that they can lead
- provide the necessary resources
- be willing to train leaders and to give up the idea that it is easier/better/quicker to do the job himself or herself
- select and/or develop principals who are secure in their own capabilities or who have the potential to learn
- encourage diversity among schools
- put the spotlight of success on the schools, knowing there are plenty of opportunities for the superintendent and board to shine
- resist the temptation to step in when the going gets rough
- monitor progress carefully so everyone knows the effort is important

to the district and that schools will be held fully accountable for their efforts

- be careful not to overburden schools with reporting paperwork (Barbara J. Hansen and Carl L. Marburger 1988)

The District Office

Traditional district services include "negotiating collective bargaining agreements, maintaining a staff applicant pool, purchasing, district-wide maintenance, food services, data processing, printing, transportation, [and] curriculum expertise" (Hansen and Marburger 1988). The district office will need to change "how the schools access those functions as the emphasis shifts from controlling what goes on in the schools to assisting schools in solving their problems" (Hansen and Marburger 1988). It is imperative for the district staff to know that their jobs are still important.

The most common problems created by school districts shifting to an SBM system are, according to Marburger:

- failure to develop "a comprehensive statement of commitment" to SBM
- inability to "distinguish between and clarify the roles of the central board and councils"
- failure to distinguish the council's role from the various organizations already in existence in the schools and district
- failure to provide training
- "bureaucratic slowness" in responding to council needs
- failure to provide followup services and training at council meetings
- failure to "designate a person whose major responsibility is oversight" of the district's SBM activities
- loss of superintendents and principals during the early stages of implementation

To prevent these problems and to aid individual schools during the transition to an SBM system, districts should do the following, according to David:

- build strong alliances with the teachers' union
- delegate authority to schools to define new roles, select staff, and create new learning environments
- demonstrate and promote shared decision-making
- communicate goals, guiding images, and information

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School-Based Management

By Lori Jo Oswald

What Is School-Based Management?

School-based management means the decentralization of decision-making authority. In an SBM system, authority can transfer from school boards to superintendents, from superintendents to principals, and from principals to other members of the school community such as teachers and parents.

The philosophy of SBM can be summed up in the following way: "The closer a decision is made to a student served by the decision, the better it is likely to serve the student" (William H. Clune and Paula A. White 1988). SBM is now viewed by many educators as a viable alternative to a more centralized system. Priscilla Wohlstetter explains, "There are efficiency reasons for using school-based management. People at the school site know the students best" (interview, January 26, 1995).

Although SBM has existed in one form or another in many schools for at least two decades, it wasn't until the mid to late 1980s that SBM was developed as a formally structured management style. SBM caught on quickly, and many schools have now implemented it in various forms. "Of all the reform movements of this era, none has received as much attention as school-based management," writes Joseph Murphy (1994).

The Oregon School Study Council—an organization of member school districts in the state—is a service of the College of Education, University of Oregon.

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Advantages of SBM

Proponents of SBM argue that it may accomplish the following:

- facilitate the development of positive teacher attitudes toward school leaders
- increase teacher commitment to school goals and objectives, thereby increasing teacher morale and reducing absenteeism and turnover
- have a positive effect on the relationship among schools, parents, and community members because involvement tends to strengthen public confidence in schools
- provide better programs for students because resources will be available to directly match student needs
- ensure "higher quality" decisions because they are made by groups instead of individuals
- clarify organizational goals
- support staff creativity and innovation
- generate public confidence
- focus accountability for decisions
- bring both financial and instructional resources in line with the instructional goals developed in each school
- nurture and stimulate new leaders at all levels
- increase both the quantity and quality of communication
- lead to improved student academic achievement

Roles and Responsibilities in SBM

Both the district and the schools have distinctive roles to perform in an SBM system, and only when they work collaboratively can SBM be truly successful. Decision-making authority must be proportionately distributed among the stakeholders: school board members, superintendents and other district officials, principals, teachers, parents, and community members. Some also feel student participation is essential, particularly in high schools.

The School Board

The board's roles are as follows: setting and revising policies to promote and support SBM, handling negotiations, allocating overall funds, establishing a climate supportive of SBM, determining district priorities, monitoring the SBM program's success, interfacing with senior governments, and serving as public advocates for SBM.

The District Office and Superintendent

The key word that describes the administration's role in SBM is *facilitate*. Because the administration no longer has control over expenditures, curriculum, and personnel, district office administrators facilitate instead of control schools' actions by formulating and defining the district's general polices and objectives.

Jackie Kowalski and Arnold Oates (1993) say that under SBM, superintendents must have the following leadership skills: instructional leadership (having the qualities of fairness, communication, visibility, high expectations, and a sense of priority), transformational leadership (helping others solve problems together), and visionary leadership (envisioning a new system of education). In addition, the superintendent must have the following characteristics, say Kowalski and Oates: good listening skills, trust-building skills, the ability to be a change agent, conflict-management skills, and risk-taking skills.

The Principal

At the building level, the principal is usually the key figure in SBM. "If principals didn't exist before school-based management, they'd have to be created to carry out the system," says an SBM task force member (AASA and others 1988). In SBM, principals not only have increased responsibility but also increased accountability.

According to Clune and White, the principal in an SBM system has more authority and responsibility in three areas: school programs, shared governance, and district decision-making. Wohlstetter and Briggs list the principal's "emerging roles" under SBM: designer/champion of involvement structures (by developing and empowering decision-making teams), motivator/manager of change (by encouraging staff development), and liaison to the outside world (by bringing to the school new ideas and research about teaching and learning, for example).

Teachers

Teacher empowerment and accountability are major ingredients of SBM. Teachers influence decisions by participating in planning, developing, monitoring, and improving instructional programs within the school. Teachers help to set goals, identify programs and practices necessary to achieve school goals, collect and interpret data related to the goals, and assist the principal in managing resources to ensure their improvement plans are successful.

Parents

Involvement of parents is essential to successful implementation of SBM. Ultimately, the argument for parent involvement rests on benefits to children. "Studies have shown that students get better grades, have better attitudes toward school and have high aspirations if parents are aware of what's happening in school and encourage their children," says Leon Lynn (1994).

The School Council's Function in SBM

Most schools implement SBM through a formal management structure called the SBM council, also known as the site council, school team, advisory committee, or management team. The purpose of the council is to ensure decentralized decision-making at the site level that includes representatives of constituent bodies. Teachers, parents, community members, and, in some cases, students are involved from the outset of the decision-making process. Some school councils include the principal as a member; in others, the

principal receives the council's recommendations or decisions.

Generally, SBM councils advise the principal in budget allocation, textbook selection, and personnel selection. The council may also exchange information with teachers to formulate program goals. Since by its very definition SBM is a flexible system, the council's function is designed differently for different districts and schools.

Implementation Guidelines

In an SBM system, principals and their staffs often gain decision-making authority in three areas: budgeting, curriculum, and personnel.

School-Based Budgeting

School-based budgeting refers to the delegation of the budgetary authority to the school. The distribution process at the building level is largely dependent on the administrative style of the principal. Budget control is the heart of SBM because the curricular and personnel decisions are largely dependent upon budgetary decisions. It is common for districts to allocate a fixed "lump sum" to each school, usually based on the number of students and the special needs of the school. Each school is free to spend the money according to its plans and needs, while the district retains control over support services.

Richard G. Neal (1988) cites several advantages of school-based budgeting: First, the school district's resources are put more effectively where they are needed. Second, schools have more of an incentive to control spending in certain areas (such as utilities) in order to have more money available for other areas (such as supplies for students). And finally, budgeting decisions are more likely to be supported since there are "greater feelings of ownership" by stakeholders.

School-Based Curriculum

School-based curriculum refers to the authority delegated to schools to design, develop, and focus the school curriculum within the framework provided by the school board. In some districts, schools are free to design their own curricula as long as they meet the state guidelines regarding content. In other words, the schools have control over the "how's" while the district or state guidelines determine the "what's" of the instructional program (Wohlstetter and colleagues).

In some cases, the central office may maintain a selection of curricula from which district schools can develop their own, which are then reviewed by the superintendents. Based on interviews with over 100 teachers and administrators, Paula A. White (1992) found that "school-based curriculum development has enabled teachers to recommend new courses, to redesign report cards, to make scheduling changes, to select in-service workshops, and to participate in textbook selection."

Personnel

In SBM, staff selection is often the responsibility of the principal. In some schools, council members and teachers assist the principal in selecting teachers from a pool of qualified applicants maintained by the central office. In others, applicants contact the principal after the district office provides information about existing vacancies. In both cases, the principal has the final authority over hiring and firing personnel. The district usually negotiates salaries, working conditions, benefits, and grievance procedures with the union.

In many districts, schools determine the number and the mix of paraprofessionals and teachers they hire. Priscilla Wohlstetter and colleagues (1994) explain that having control over personnel frees the school to hire staff members who will conform to the culture of the school.

How Successful Is SBM?

Supporters of SBM claim the positive outcomes it brings about include gains in achievement, lower dropout rates, increased attendance, and reduced disciplinary problems. But others maintain some of the claims should be tempered.

Anita A. Summers and Amy W. Johnson (1995) examined twenty studies on the effects of SBM. "The results of SBM," they conclude, "appear to be some increased sense of empowerment and involvement of the stakeholders (though not uniformly so), and virtually no evidence that SBM translates into improved student performance."

According to David T. Conley (1993), the assumption that decentralization of decision-making will lead to improved academic outcomes may be erroneous if accountability is not increased as

authority is decentralized:

> In education, there is little evidence that wholesale decentralization for its own sake will necessarily or automatically lead to improved learning outcomes. What is absent from almost every plan for decentralizing decision-making is a concomitant increase in accountability to accompany enhanced authority to make decisions. Such accountability is critical to making decentralization work.

Carol Midgley and Stewart Wood (1993) conclude that SBM needs to be seen "as an *important process* for achieving substantive school reform" rather than an end in itself.

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- create direct communication links between school staff and top leaders
- encourage experimentation and risk taking
- provide for waivers from restrictive rules
- motivate principals to involve teachers in school-site decisions
- promote creation of new roles in schools and central offices
- create new forms of accountability with school staff
- provide broad range of opportunities for professional development
- provide time for staff to assume new roles and responsibilities
- reduce size of the central office
- promote role of central office as facilitator and coordinator of school change
- match salaries to increased responsibilities (June L. David 1989)

The Principal

Principals in Milwaukee raised these questions when asked by the district to implement SBM:

- Who will be held responsible for team decisions?
- How will principals be evaluated?
- Can my school drop the process after it has begun?
- What will this program give me that I don't already have?
- How much flexibility will principals have?
- What is the outcome expected that will be worth the extra effort?
- What are the measures of success?
- Will the money allocated to the schools who are piloting the process affect the nonpilot schools?
- Who will serve on the council? Will council member positions be open to the public?
- Is there any provision for extra help or overtime being considered? (Milwaukee Public Schools 1987, in Hansen and Marburger 1988)

If these questions are adequately addressed before implementation, principals likely will be supportive. Most important, advise Hansen and Marburger (1988), SBM "should be presented to principals as an invitation, not an edict."

Methods Principals Use To Distribute Information

Effective principals use several methods for distributing information to avoid problems in SBM implementation, Wohlstetter and Briggs found:

- working with staff to develop a clear vision for the school and to ensure everyone knows what the vision is (example: hold professional development days for the faculty to define the school's mission and goals)
- sending newsletters to the entire community on school activities
- distributing student test scores to staff for assistance in planning curriculum and instructional improvements
- meeting with other principals in the district to share and gain insight
- passing on research findings and innovative practices to teachers

Marburger lists the most common problems created by principals in an SBM system: failure to enlist the support of most of the staff, including support personnel; insistence on veto power over the council's decisions; and always setting the agenda for council meetings.

The most important lesson a principal must learn, advises Abby Barry Bergman (1992), principal of the Ralph S. Maugham School in Tenafly, New Jersey, is to let go of power: "I found that I needed to learn to let go and provide the means for people to solve their own problems.... The rewards for all of us soon become apparent."

To compensate principals for their increased management workload under SBM, Lindelow and Heynderickx advise emphasizing the rewards of leadership and authority they will obtain, providing a computerized management-information system so they can manipulate budgetary and other data as an aid in decision-making, and providing extensive training in SBM responsibilities and general management skills.

Bergman advises other principals who are changing to an SBM style of administration to learn to listen, establish patterns for communication, understand individual styles, promote open communication, work to build trust, look for new perspectives on problems, promote autonomy and "let go," and take time for self-reflection.

Teachers

It is important to clarify for teachers what SBM is and how it will affect them. Some tips for approaching teachers include the following:

- Consider going through the teachers' union.
- Be open and flexible, allowing teachers to choose when and if they want to participate.
- Be aware of the increased workload involved in an SBM system, and consider offering rewards and other incentives (Priscilla Wohlstetter and

Susan Albers Mohrman 1993) as well as developing plans for reducing teachers' workloads, providing time for professional development, and reorganizing schedules to free teachers to participate in decision-making activities (David).

- Provide training for teachers on what SBM is and how it will affect them.
- Explain the positive benefits to teachers, such as more freedom to develop curriculum compared to the traditional system.
- Offer teachers the opportunity to participate as team members or to choose a "leader" to represent them on the site council.
- Explain the importance of trust and communication in an SBM system, and clearly show how teachers can express their views.
- Obtain the teachers' input before forming site councils or other committees. There are many different types of SBM; find out if the teachers prefer to have individual control over curriculum and textbooks through subject-area committees, the school council, or some other system of their own design.

Offering rewards to teachers to compensate for their increased time and responsibility is often a way to ensure support for SBM. Wohlstetter and Briggs suggest reducing teaching loads or providing funding to attend professional-development activities. To gain a "sense of community," some principals reward the entire school community instead of individuals.

Parents and Community Members

Seeking out parents from the following groups is a good way to find active, interested council members, recommend Hansen and Marburger (1988): existing organizations such as the PTA, PTSA, or PTO; Chapter 1 committees; and special-interest groups, such as parents of gifted or handicapped children. Hansen and Marburger also suggest that the following should be done:

> Try to reach out to as wide a constituency as possible.... Assure them that [SBM] is not every school "doing its own thing," and that the board and central office will be carefully monitoring the results. Explain the function of school councils and point out that they will supplement and not supplant existing organizations. Ask for their help in getting information about [SBM] into the community.

It is also essential to show parents how their involvement in SBM will differ from more traditional approaches—parents "participate in the school's agenda" instead of taking part in school-determined activities (Hansen and Marburger 1988). One of the ways to get parents involved, Lynn recom-

mends, is to "invite family members into the decision-making process of the school as true contributors, not tokens."

To enlist parent membership in school councils, Oregon schools use a variety of methods. At Eugene's Roosevelt Middle School, the parent council elects the school-council representative (Peterson - del Mar 1993). "Other possible arrangements," writes Peterson - del Mar, "include election or appointment of parent representatives by school staff or a blending of the electoral process, in which teachers choose council members from a slate of candidates selected by a parent group."

Students

Although some education writers mention that students are often included on school councils, few provide any guidelines for how student members should be enlisted and what their roles should be. This is certainly an important area for further study. Many Oregon high school site councils select a teacher-nominated student for council membership.

In summary, to enlist stakeholder involvement, it is essential to explain what SBM is and to clarify to each participant what his or her role will be. Training and educating each stakeholder in the principles of SBM are essential components for successful implementation.

Chapter 4

The School Council's Function in SBM

Most schools implement SBM through a formal management structure called the SBM council, also known as the site council, school team, advisory committee, or management team. The purpose of the council is to ensure decentralized decision-making at the site level that includes representatives of constituent bodies. Teachers, parents, community members, and, in some cases, students are involved from the outset of the decision-making process, thereby enhancing the quality of decisions. Some school councils include the principal as a member; in others, the principal receives the council's recommendations or implements its decisions.

The council, then, usually serves in one of two capacities: (1) it assists the principal in making decisions in the areas of budgeting, curriculum, and personnel, or (2) it is the primary decision-making unit in the school with the principal as a member. From her studies of SBM over the past four years, Wohlstetter found that even in "principal-based" SBM models, where the principal has final accountability and authority for school performance, the most effective principals "always set up structures, usually formal structures, whereby various stakeholders have input" (interview).

This chapter provides a brief overview of school-council composition, functions, and guidelines for decision-making, with examples given from several Oregon schools. For a more detailed explanation of school councils, the Oregon School Study Council has published *School-Site Councils: The Hard Work of Achieving Grassroots Democracy,* by David Peterson - del Mar (1993).

School Council Composition

The selection and roles of council members vary in each district and

school, based on district philosophy, school needs, and available resources. Most councils are composed of the principal, teachers, staff members, parents, and sometimes community members and students. Hansen and Marburger (1988) say that support staff—custodians, secretaries, aides, and crossing guards—also make valuable council members because they frequently hear from parents and are aware of informal school decision-making. In addition, some councils include professional-support staff members, such as school psychologists and attendance officers.

The composition and roles of SBM councils range from a three-member leadership team to large committees that involve all the faculty members in the decision-making process. In some schools, several committees work concurrently, the scope of each committee determined by the nature of the problems. Council size should be between seven and fifteen, Hansen and Marburger (1988) advise, though the size may depend on whether the school's major constituencies are represented. It is essential that the members remember they are representing various constituencies and must relay their decisions back to those groups for consultation or approval.

The Oregon Educational Act for the 21st Century requires that teachers, classified district employees, building administrators, and parents of students must be members of site councils. Teachers, elected by peers, must compose a majority on each council; the principal must be a member; classified members are elected by peers; and students and community members may be added at the council's discretion. The size can range from seven to twenty members. Small schools may petition for a waiver from the Oregon Department of Education.

Specific Functions of the SBM Council

Generally, SBM councils advise the principal in budget allocation, textbook selection, and personnel selection. The council may also exchange information with teachers to formulate program goals. Since by its very definition SBM is a flexible system, the council's function is designed differently for different districts and schools. Some definitions and examples follow.

In Lindelow and Heynderickx's view, "The principal may retain authority for some decision-making, such as personnel selection, but all other decisions concerning the school budget, curriculum, and new programs are made by the council through a consensus voting process. The principal serves as chairperson but cannot veto council decisions."

In Salem-Keizer, Superintendent Homer Kearns said the SBM councils are formed mainly to make schools more effective in terms of student

achievement, so councils confine themselves to instructional-improvement programs. Other schools have one of the following council structures:

- Leadership teams are created mainly to provide input to the principal in budgeting, hiring, and instructional improvement.
- The site-based committee works in an advisory capacity, helping the principal, through consensus or voting, to make final decisions.
- The schools operate under a completely decentralized system, where the principal functions as a facilitator. In these schools, the school councils have the power to formulate and prioritize the instructional programs, budget-related activities, and teachers' tasks.

Wohlstetter noted that in actively restructuring SBM schools, "there is never one single council that is empowered to make decisions. There's always a web or network of organizations to make decisions. In some way, nearly the whole faculty is involved in these high-performance schools" (interview). She explained how these subcommittees work in practice:

> The site-based council is supported by a series of subcommittees that are basically the work horses of the council. This tends to lessen the burden on the council and has a lot of benefits: More seems to get done, the council is more productive, there is less teacher burnout, and communication among the faculty improves because those subcommittees or working teams meet on a regular basis. So there is ongoing talk about portfolio assessment, issues related to professional development, and other substantive issues. This is really different from how the teaching profession usually works, where the teacher is only concerned about what goes on in his or her classroom.

Guidelines for Decision-Making

Hansen and Marburger (1988) offer guidelines, used by the Salt Lake City Board of Education, to help councils determine their decision-making authority. The councils should ask themselves if the decisions are legal, in line with board policy, ethical, within the budget, and within the contract.

Lindelow and Heynderickx refer to the SBM system as a "trust-based" enterprise, meaning responsibilities are delegated on the basis of trust. A misuse of trust may jeopardize the entire venture. Cautioning against this problem, Douglas Gowler, principal of Cherry Creek School District in Colorado, says the establishment of trust between the principal and teachers is an important prerequisite to the formal involvement of the parents and community members (Lindelow and Heynderickx).

Wohlstetter said that for SBM councils to be successful, there are "lots of different pieces of the puzzle that need to be in place":

> There needs to be some sort of expectations or goals or standards set at the top of the system at the state or national level. Then, at the next level, some districts provide curriculum frameworks—any sort of documents that tell schools what their goals are, the direction the schools should go in terms of what kids should know and do. Then, schools need to have enough flexibility and power to design their own mission within that broader framework.

Abuses and Problems

One potential abuse, according to Lindelow and Heynderickx, is that some SBM councils want to assume full control of the decision-making process of schools. To guard against this, in Salem-Keizer, the Area Office maintains school profiles to ensure that the teams are functioning in accordance with the district mission statements.

Marburger warns of the following problems created by councils:

- giving the decision-making power to the principal
- always looking to the principal for answers
- taking on an issue too difficult at the outset
- failing to deal with a council member who is too aggressive
- failing to "establish norms or ground rules for how the group is to behave"
- failing to "listen to each other and especially to parent and community members"

The first problem, giving too much power to the principal, is a major criticism of site councils leveled by Betty Malen, Rodney Ogawa, and Jennifer Kranz (1990). On teacher-principal councils, "teachers do not exert meaningful influence" because principals exert control over agenda content, meeting format, and information flow, and teachers tend to defer to the principal. When parents and community

Guidelines for Effective Councils

The Oregon Professional Development Center (1995) provides the following guidelines for effective school councils:

1. Council development is a continuous process.
2. The leadership roles of principal, superintendent, central-office administrators, and school board must be clearly defined and redefined in relation to the changing activities of school councils.
3. The use of trained and neutral facilitators greatly increases the functioning of school councils.
4. Clear school-council communication channels within a building, between buildings, with the district office, and with the local community are key to success.
5. Significant change takes time.
6. The emergence of school councils leads to major changes of roles and relationships among school and school district personnel.

members are part of the council, the principals and teachers—the "professionals"—tend to control the meetings and even the topics that come up for discussion by the group. Malen and colleagues list additional factors that limit teachers and parents from influencing school-policy decisions:

- Councils tend to be relatively homogeneous groups.
- Members tend to see their roles as acquiring information and providing service rather than making policy.
- Unwritten, ingrained school norms guide and govern behavior and decision-making authority.
- SBM plans can be ambiguous.
- Council decisions often must be consistent with existing policies.
- Council members are rarely given needed resources (time, technical assistance, independent sources of information, training, and funds to assess and develop programs).

Another problem to watch for is that council members need to understand the dynamics of group decision-making. Otherwise, say Kenneth G. Polizzi and colleagues (1991), team decision-making can be a "nonproductive experience" due to disagreements, lack of enthusiasm, time constraints, and lack of decision-making skills. Training council members in participatory decision-making will help overcome this barrier. Members learn how to identify problems within their domain, move from a general issue to a specific question, obtain information, make efficient decisions, negotiate, delegate, evaluate decisions, and seek support from those outside the council.

SBM Councils in Oregon

Under the Oregon Educational Act for the 21st Century, site councils are required at all schools by September 1995. The act states, "A restructured educational system is necessary to achieve the state's goals of the best educated citizens in the nation by the year 2000 and a work force equal to any in the world by the year 2010." To support these goals, explains the Task Force Report, "the Legislative Assembly reconfirmed its commitment to the school based or site committee structure previously established in 1987 with the passage of HB 2020, the first in a series of school reform acts" (*Site-Based*). HB 2020 had fostered the establishment of SBM councils designed to "encourage new initiatives in school-based management and the assessment of educational progress, to provide new and expanded career opportunities for teachers and to facilitate efforts to restructure the school workplace to provide educators with greater responsibility while increasing their accountability" (ORS 336.710[4]).

In the act, the council is "seen as a means for involving all the stake-

holders in the decisions related to each school's improvement efforts." The following functions are required of all site-councils:

- developing specific site-council roles and responsibilities
- establishing an overall decision-making model for schools, including site-council bylaws
- creating communications strategies and an ongoing communications plan
- developing and implementing a school-improvement plan and school goals
- developing and maintaining an updated school profile, including use of indexes of teaching and learning conditions and their effectiveness
- encouraging staff development
- administering grants for school improvement and professional development
- ensuring that the open meeting law is followed

In 1989, the 21st Century Schools Program was passed by the state legislature, which delegated the responsibility of developing and administering the program to the 21st Century Schools Councils. The act shows strong support for SBM: "Real and fundamental change in the structure of schools and education must emerge from the school site rather than be imposed externally or unilaterally."

The 21st Century School Councils are "charged with three main areas of work: improving instructional programs, establishing staff development programs and developing and coordinating school improvements" (Oregon Professional Development Center, *A Guide...*).

Salem-Keizer School District

The schools in the Salem-Keizer district have two initial obligations, said superintendent Kearns: "They have an obligation to form their teams and they have an obligation to make a student profile. I don't believe a school can properly do its job even as it is defined now, without having those two things." The responsibility of forming the teams is left to the principals in this district.

According to McKay Area Operations Director Winston Miller, individual schools determine the structure of their SBM councils. Each school in the district also decides how council members will be selected and determines the degree of participation the principal, teachers, classified staff, parents, and community members will have. The principal's role may be

facilitator, coordinator, or administrator in relation to the council, depending on the council's structure and purpose. The central office emphasizes that decisions made at the site should not be "made in isolation behind closed doors by just one person," said Miller. "There is plenty of input; there is plenty of involvement of the staff and community in making those decisions."

Areas of Council Decision-Making

In Salem-Keizer, the site councils may choose to be involved in determining the following:

- budget implementation priorities
- organizational structure (department, teams, school schedules)
- student schedule and staff assignments
- use of staff resources and hiring recommendations
- curriculum development and implementation
- program innovations (restructuring, extended student day, developmentally appropriate practices, and so forth)
- student conduct guidelines
- community relationships including business partnerships
- others as determined/developed by the council

Many of the schools in Kearns' district have been the recipients of HB 2020 money, and some are involved in the Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory's Onward to Excellence program. Since this program requires site-based committees and maintenance of student profiles, most schools already had some form of SBM councils before the most recent educational act was passed.

Hayesville Elementary School

Hayesville Elementary School in the Salem-Keizer district functions through a Leadership Team comprising the principal and three team leaders. The team leaders are appointed by the principal on a yearly basis, but they may be reappointed upon the principal's recommendations. Principal Ed John said decisions are made at three levels based on the nature of the problems:

1. For some problems, like day-to-day running of the school, the principal and team leaders jointly make decisions in their weekly meetings.

2. Other issues, such as affirmative action, require the consensus of teachers. The team leaders get input at the team-meeting level, where each group of teachers makes decisions based on consensus and the information is passed on to the principal by the team leaders for final approval.

3. Finally, certain issues are decided through direct staff involvement in the general faculty meetings.

The team leader at Hayesville, Kathy Kolb, believes that the empowerment of team leaders is crucial for the effective functioning of the leadership teams and that the principal's leadership style influences the degree of empowerment given to the teams.

North Salem High School

At North Salem High School, teacher empowerment through the site-based council began in 1988, when the school received a state HB 2020 grant. Prior to that, the school had participated in the Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory's Onward to Excellence program. Both of these activities mandated the establishment of a site-based committee at the school. Consequently, North Salem High School had experience with teacher-led decision-making before the district launched the SBM program.

According to Principal Judy Patterson, site-based management exists when "the faculty and the administration work together to find the best programs and strategies to meet the needs of *all* our kids. Decentralization within the building is essential," she said. "To be successful, the faculty needs to have ownership. They need to be involved, which creates investment in the belief that the school is theirs. It enhances teachers professionally to be involved in the decision-making."

The site committee at North Salem High School is composed of certified and classified staff, parents, and students. Meetings are held weekly, rotating between afterschool hours and evenings.

Uniquely, North Salem's site-based committee is formed by the faculty, not the principal. The faculty also determines the rules, regulations, and decision-making process of the site council. The committee chooses its own chairperson and secretary, who function as such for a year. The full faculty elects the certificated representatives. The classified staff elects the classified representatives. Students are appointed. Parents are selected after the Local School Advisory Committee (LSAC) processes names of interested parents to the site council, which then selects two representatives. "Our parent newsletter, *North News*, 'advertises' the need for parent representatives," said Patterson, "and those wishing to apply contact the school or LSAC."

Decision-making is by consensus on the site committee. If, however, the matter is referred to the school as a whole for a decision, the decision is made with a 70 percent vote. The school as a whole is composed of the entire staff (both classified and certificated) and any parents or students wishing to attend the meeting. The membership of the LSAC is also asked to vote or give input for items that are classified as "instructional or school improvement."

Decision-making at North Salem High School occurs through other groups and committees in addition to the site-based council. Each group or committee has its own area of responsibility.

- The administrative team is made up of the principal, the assistant principals, and the office manager. They make decisions regarding manage-

ment of school, safety, personnel, and budget. Members of this team maintain a direct link to the district office. They also manage the school calendar, student activities, athletic events, community events, and public relations. Most, if not all, of these activities are conducted with input and participation from others as appropriate.

- The leadership team, made up of administrators and department coordinators, works with the faculty to give input to the principal for making decisions in the areas of management, staffing, budgeting, and building the master schedule.
- Other subcommittees, such as the technology committee, faculty advisory committee, discipline committee, and faculty welfare committee, look at specific areas and provide feedback regarding needs, concerns, and priorities to the leadership team, department coordinators, and site council.

Richmond Elementary School

In Richmond Elementary School, the formation of a site-based committee was triggered by the school's participation as a state model in a Chapter 1 project in 1989. Under directions from the district's central office, the twelve- to fifteen-member committee, which has now made the transition into a 21st Century Schools Council, is composed of administrators, teachers, classified staff (including a counselor), and parents. "It's important to represent all grades and set up guidelines," said Principal Kathleen Bebe. Agendas and timelines are determined by the committee.

The committee's main focus is improving the learning environment by monitoring programs and projects such as the Chapter 1 Schoolwide Project, including the Federal Bilingual Program, Indian and Migrant Federal Education Program, Family Involvement Programs, Preschool Transition Program, and several small teacher-initiated instructional programs. Decision-making by the committee is generally done through either consensus or voting, with the principal retaining final authority over decisions.

Besides the site-based committee, Bebe also set up an administrative-support team made up of a family-involvement coordinator, a Chapter 1 teacher, and four team leaders (a Chapter 1 team leader, a K-1-2 team leader, a 3-4 team leader, and a 5-6 team leader). The principal meets with the team on a biweekly basis to discuss issues concerning the school district that have implications for the school building. They also discuss the school's internal policies regarding discipline, scheduling, and other administrative issues. When the principal requires additional staff input, the team leaders consult with their respective teacher groups then give feedback to the principal.

Team leaders are volunteers. Extension of their terms is contingent upon the recommendation and approval of the principal. The school also

holds general staff meetings for issues requiring a consensus of all staff members.

Portland School District

Pat Burk, director of the Oregon Educational Improvement and Professional Development Act, said that in the Portland District

> we want councils to focus on local school issues and school-improvement planning. Councils have three tasks: to develop a school-improvement plan, to develop a staff development plan, and to monitor implementation of the Oregon Development Act at that school. The question of standards, on the other hand, is a function of the State of Oregon and local school boards. The school district, through the board, provides some unity of standards, while the local schools, through the site councils, focus on how to implement those standards, especially concerning student achievement.

In a report to the Board of Education, Roosevelt High School's site council attributed the following improvements at the school to the site council, "the major vehicle for the change process to grow and flourish in our educational institution":

- "We have gone from a school where there was little communication, with teachers working in isolation, to a school with broad-based support of restructuring and change from informed and active teachers."
- "Teachers are no longer isolated. They are not only working in same-subject departments but also are participating weekly in cross-disciplinary pathway teams."
- The council "provided in-service opportunities designed to give our teachers the skills needed to better meet the educational needs of our students. Staff attended presentations on Total Quality Management, Cooperative Learning, Consensus-Building and Outcome Based Education. The Site Council also sent teachers to a variety of conferences and other school sites to collect the best data upon which to base our changes."
- The council designed a program wherein over 100 businesses and agencies participated in Roosevelt's work-based learning programs.
- The council worked on curriculum restructuring, including the creation of cross-disciplinary Career Pathway teams and a new bell schedule to give teachers time for developing new coursework.

At James Madison High School, the council has the following duties: (1) improving the school's instructional program, (2) developing and implementing a plan to improve the professional growth and career opportunities for staff, (3) coordinating the implementation of the Oregon Educational Act for the 21st Century at the local school level, and (4) fostering family-school partnerships.

Subcommittees are an essential element to achieving the council's goals at James Madison. The existing subcommittees are Budget, Curriculum and Instruction, Grants and Grant Development, Professional Development, School Affairs, and Instructional Technology. The subcommittees receive approval from the site council to implement action plans. Membership on the subcommittees includes faculty, students, and parents, and one member of the site council should be on the committee.

Eugene Public Schools

In the late 1980s, a group of twenty-five parents, teachers, and administrators in the Eugene Public Schools was trained in basic SBM skills. "Our job," said Lynne George, coprincipal of South Eugene High School, "was to investigate this mode of decision-making and present a model/proposal to set up a district site council." After two years of training were completed and all employee labor groups agreed to accept SBM, the system was initiated in the district.

The Eugene Public Schools' "Site-Based Decision Making Guidelines" make it clear that two areas are, "without exception," the responsibility of the building administrator only: individual staff personnel matters (hiring, discipline, assignment, and displacement) and individual student personnel matters (class assignment, discipline, and related issues). Although neither can be delegated to a site council, committees can advise the administration on hiring decisions.

Chapters 2, 3, and 4 of this Bulletin detailed the stakeholders' roles and responsibilities in SBM, as well as listed problems and ways to overcome or prevent those problems. Chapter 5 will offer some specific steps the stakeholders can take when changing to an SBM system, particularly by explaining their authority over budget, curriculum, and personnel.

Chapter 5

Implementation Guidelines

In an SBM system, principals and their staff members s often gain decision-making authority in three areas: budgeting, curriculum, and personnel. This chapter provides information on how SBM schools can make use of their new-found authority in these areas. It also includes questions to consider before implementing SBM and, once these questions are considered, steps to follow when shifting to an SBM system.

School-Based Budgeting

School-based budgeting refers to the delegation of budgetary authority to the school. The distribution process at the building level is largely dependent on the administrative style of the principal. Generally, school-based budgeting can be done one of the following ways:

- The principal has complete authority and accountability for the building budget.
- The principal and a small group of other administrators and department heads make the decisions.
- A special budget committee handles budget decisions.
- The site council controls the budget.

In most districts practicing SBM, individual schools prefer to leave purchasing, warehousing, and acquirinig supplies to the district office, even though the schools are free to use the allocated budget for essential support services. For example, the Fairfield-Suisun Unified District in California "has established the departments of maintenance, data processing, printing, food services, transportation, and personnel as independent budgeting units. Schools buy the services out of their budgets each year and can carry over surpluses they have" (Lindelow and Heynderickx).

Lindelow and Heynderickx view budget control as the heart of SBM because curricular and personnel decisions are largely dependent upon

budgetary decisions. It is common for districts to allocate a fixed "lump sum" to each school, usually based on the number of students and the special needs of the school. Each school is free to spend the money according to its plans and needs, while the district retains control over support services.

Richard G. Neal (1988) cites several advantages of school-based budgeting. First, the school district's resources are put more effectively where they are needed. Second, schools have more of an incentive to control spending in certain areas (such as utilities) in order to have more money available for other areas (such as supplies for students). And finally, budgeting decisions are more likely to be supported since there are "greater feelings of ownership" by stakeholders.

Salem-Keizer School District

Lindelow and Heynderickx report that in most school districts "funds are allocated to schools according to number of students and special school needs. Each school decides how it will spend its funds and what its educational goals will be." The Salem-Keizer district follows this process of resource allocation on a per-pupil basis. The principals in the district have total control over the allocated funds for redistribution within the building on the basis of priority needs. However, the reallocation of the budget within the school building is confined to expenditures for program development, general administration, and other instructional matters. It does not extend to the monitoring of funds for hiring extra personnel. Through its five Area Offices, Salem-Keizer allocates additional funds, similar to discretionary funds, to each school based on individual school needs.

How principals allocate funds varies from school to school. At Hayesville Elementary School, the leadership team and the principal jointly decide budgetary matters, on the basis of input from the staff. At Richmond Elementary School, the principal allocates funds to the respective teacher teams based on enrollment and team needs. At North Salem High School, the site-based committee, along with other groups, gives input to decide priority programs and needs, and the principal allocates funds accordingly to facilitate program implementation. It is important to note that most principals in the Salem-Keizer district involve the staff in one way or another in determining funding needs. The schools have the freedom to utilize the allocated funds according to their priorities while complying with state and district regulations.

In her interviews with teachers from SBM schools, White (1992) found that teachers who were involved in budget decisions felt important, in charge, and knowledgeable about how much money was available. They also experienced a sense of community with other teachers and were better able to

communicate school goals and teaching objectives to parents. White continues:

> Teachers... stated that they were more careful with allocations when they were in charge of balancing their own account. They set their own priorities and purchased materials and equipment that they needed the most. As teachers met and discussed budget priorities with other teachers and administrators, they became more informed about school needs and expenses. As teachers became engaged in setting budget priorities, they developed better understandings of which items were affordable and which were not.

School-Based Budgeting: Implementation Tips

Neal (1989) offers the following tips for school boards and superintendents considering school-based budgeting:

- Make a firm commitment to SBM.
- Seek out a qualified SBM consultant.
- Be willing to accept principals' occasional mistakes, especially at the outset.
- Review principals' budgets to be on the safe side.
- Recognize that "collective bargaining changes the rules" about giving power to principals over hiring or instructional programs.
- "Outline the central office's role."
- Accompany stakeholders' autonomy with accountability.

Granting budget authority to principals, says Neal (1989), can create problems, for "it means taking budget authority away from the central office, a move that can lead to bad feelings and messy office politics." Also, principals complain about the extra time involved in budget work and the accountability it places on them. Some principals have been too conservative in their budgets. Despite these problems, Neal says, SBM budgeting is the best way to meet demands on schools today: "Can any school executive risk the improper allocation of scarce educational resources? We think not. We believe the move to school-based management is our best hope for improving our schools."

Prince William County Public Schools

In Prince William County (Virginia) Public Schools, a task force reviews individual school budgets for instruction, maintenance, security, personnel, and other school functions (Neal 1989). Some money is then set aside for transportation, food service, and the central office, but the rest is divided up on a per-child basis and allocated to each school. The amount going to each school ranges from $1.3 to $9.5 million. Neal describes the budgeting as follows:

> The principals of the five pilot schools were given their pro-rata share

> of the school system's budget and left free to allocate funds as they saw fit. It was their responsibility to hire employees, arrange to have their buildings cleaned, pay utility bills, and allocate instructional funds as necessary to provide a solid education for students.

Neal cites three advantages of this system. First, principals allocate limited resources where they are most needed. Second, they now have a greater incentive to save money. And because principals are required to "seek the advice of parents and teachers when drawing up budgets, more people are likely to believe they have a stake in the programs that are given priority." The latter works this way, explains Neal (1989): "Principals must submit budget plans outlining how they will spend their funds. But they cannot develop these plans without first discussing school priorities with an advisory committee consisting of teachers, parents, and (at the principal's option) students." Principals are not required to follow the committee's recommendations, but they are "reminded" of the staff's and the community's support and expertise.

Each budget must also abide by state regulations, accreditation standards, school board policies, and administrative regulations, though the latter two can be waived with prior approval. Once submitted, budgets are reviewed by central-office and instructional personnel for problems or omissions, but the reviewers are not allowed to make changes; only the superintendent and a director of SBM can do so. The principals' freedom comes at a price, says Neal, that of "increased accountability" for producing good students.

School-Based Curriculum

School-based curriculum refers to the authority delegated to schools to design, develop, and focus the school curriculum within the framework provided by the school board. In some districts, schools are free to design their own curricula as long as they meet the state guidelines regarding content (Lindelow and Heynderickx). In other words, the schools have control over the "hows" while the district or state guidelines determine the "whats" of the instructional program (Wohlstetter and colleagues).

Types of SBM Curricula Programs

In some cases, the central office may maintain a selection of curricula from which district schools can develop their own, which are then reviewed by the superintendent. Schools in Martin County, Florida, have the autonomy to design their curricula based on state guidelines, choosing among selected textbooks that are restricted to three or four standard series (Lindelow and

Heynderickx). Based on interviews with over 100 teachers and administrators, Paula A. White (1992) found that "school-based curriculum development has enabled teachers to recommend new courses, to redesign report cards, to make scheduling changes, to select in-service workshops, and to participate in textbook selection."

In some large districts, the school board prescribes a required basal text, while decisions regarding supplementary reading materials and teaching methods are delegated to the individual schools. Some districts also provide centralized preservice teacher training to establish content expectations for each subject.

Prasch mentions another type of school-based curriculum where the district provides a written curriculum in each subject area that includes goals, objectives, teaching methods, and recommended teaching materials. The schools are free to adopt the district curriculum or develop their own teaching materials and methods with permission from the associate superintendent of instruction.

Clune and White cite examples of schools that have used surplus funds to meet several unmet needs. Some schools have developed new math textbooks and changed their language arts and science curricula. Others have developed peer-tutoring programs and added an emphasis on thinking skills. Edmonds School District in Edmonds, Washington, added an eighth period to provide assistance to students who were behind in their work.

Salem-Keizer School District

A distinctive feature of the Salem-Keizer School District is the development of a mission statement for increasing student achievement and the Strategic Improvement Process (Kearns 1990) that outlines the means used to achieve the goals. Developed by the district's Strategic Planning Advisory Committee and adopted by the school board in 1987, the district's mission is as follows:

1. To challenge all students to fully use their abilities and aptitudes by developing lifelong learning skills in communication, critical thinking/problem solving, human relations, personal development/ self-concept, and citizenship.
2. To develop an understanding of and involvement in cross-cultural, global, and environmental relationships.
3. To develop and strengthen community partnership and commitment to public education.

An important function of the Area Office is to ascertain that the school profiles, based on the activities of the school, are consistent with the mission statements in terms of student outcomes. Since the focus of the district is to

bring school functioning in line with the mission and goals, the district uses centralized curriculum planning and prescribes basal texts. However, as Miller pointed out, the decentralization pertains to the methods of teaching and selection of additional reading materials by teachers: "We would like teachers to try more approaches and know that they are being supported because what they are trying to do is in keeping with our mission and goals."

Richmond Elementary School has several ongoing school-improvement programs under the Chapter 1 Schoolwide Project that have been independently developed by the school-site committee in cooperation with the principal to raise student performance.

North Salem High School supplements prescribed texts with several other instructional materials generated through involvement with the Onward to Excellence Program, HB 2020, and other programs.

Although not totally decentralized in terms of textbooks and curriculum, the district allows room for experimentation with teaching methods. The variety of approaches to curriculum development and the flexibility of district regulations allow schools to be creative in developing methods and materials.

Personnel

In SBM, staff selection is often the responsibility of the principal. In some schools, council members and teachers assist the principal in selecting teachers from a pool of qualified applicants maintained by the central office. In others, applicants contact the principal after the district office provides information about existing vacancies. In both cases, the principal has the final authority over hiring and firing personnel. The district usually negotiates salaries, working conditions, benefits, and grievance procedures with the union.

White (1992) interviewed teachers who were involved in staff selection, often by serving on hiring committees, and found that these teachers had positive views about their experiences:

> Teachers reviewed applications, developed interview questions, interviewed applicants, and interacted with other teachers and administrators. They believed that their input was valued since their recommendations were often followed. Teachers believed that in contrast to previous job interviews conducted primarily by administrators, their interviews emphasized questions on teaching skills and philosophy....
>
> Teachers received positive feedback from administrators, who were willing to listen and accepted suggestions from them. Teachers felt more of a responsibility for the new teachers and were eager to support the new teachers if they had a role in hiring them.

However, White found that the teachers did not want to be involved in firing decisions. "Teachers' responses indicated that even in decentralized districts where teachers are highly involved in school decision-making, teachers desire strong leadership from the principal."

In many districts, schools determine the number and the mix of paraprofessionals and teachers they hire. Wohlstetter and colleagues explain that having control over personnel frees the school to hire staff members who will conform to the culture of the school and to create a mix of staff positions that supports "the teaching and learning strategies of the campus."

Most district offices retain some authority over personnel by providing schools with district-approved lists they can hire from. For example, the Portland School District maintains a pool of qualified applicants after the

SBM Interrogatory Checklist

Jerry J. Herman (1990) offers a list of questions to consider before implementing SBM. If you can answer yes to most or all of these, he writes, then "you are ready to immediately start the process of school-based management." Otherwise, continue your discussions and reflections, and hold off on implementation.

1. "Do you *really* believe in shared decision-making?"
2. "Are you willing to take full responsibility"for your decisions?
3. Have you decided which stakeholders should have final decision-making power and which should have advisory roles?
4. Do district and school decision-makers agree on "policies, procedures, and methodologies" to implement the SBM process? Do they agree on their separate roles?
5. Have you taken enough "time to reflect on all important decision areas"?
6. Do you realize that SBM "may cause an additional workload" on the principal and staff?
7. Have local decision-makers defined what they mean by SBM?
8. Have you considered what evaluation measures will be used to assess SBM?
9. Have you budgeted time and money to conduct SBM training for those involved?
10. Will each school be able to develop its own SBM procedures, "or will there be a district structure applied to all schools"?
11. "Do you have realistic expectations of what [SBM] can do," realizing that "it is not a 'cure-all' for everything happening in the schools"?
12. Do you realize how much time and effort it will take to implement SBM?
13. Are you aware of how SBM will change the decision-making process and the entire culture of the organization?
14. Do you believe that SBM will improve your school's effectiveness and efficiency, or "are you involved simply because it is the thing to do"?
15. Do you believe that SBM "will improve communication, trust, and collaboration between the district and school levels"?
16. Do you believe that SBM will create a greater sense of ownership and support from the community and employees?
17. "Do you honestly like and respect people, and are you willing to depend on them to help you make important decisions"?
18. "Do you believe that dispersed leadership is the best type of leadership?"
19. Do your union leaders and school board support SBM?
20. "Do you believe in 'loosely coupled' organizations?"

initial screening. Then, depending on their building policies, principals hire teachers on their own or after consulting with the entire staff or team leaders. In Salem-Keizer, the district also maintains an applicant pool. If suitable candidates cannot be found from within the pool and if the school identifies a qualified person who is not part of the district pool, the principal may hire the person with central-office assistance.

As far as determining personnel needs, the procedures vary from building to building. In some Salem-Keizer schools, the principal receives information about staffing needs from the team leaders of various grades and then decides. In others, the site committee makes an initial decision about the need for additional staff, and then the principal makes the final decision. In other schools, the principal consults with team leaders and committee members and invites them to be part of the interview board that makes the final selection. In all these cases, however, the final responsibility of hiring lies with the principal alone.

One common problem noted by Wohlstetter and colleagues is that the district may require schools to accept teacher transfers, who are often seen as "undesirable because they [do] not fit the emerging approaches to teaching and learning."

Steps To Take

The American Association of School Administrators, National Association of Elementary School Principals, and National Association of Secondary School Principals offer the following implementation steps for schools planning to shift to an SBM system:

1. "Develop awareness throughout the system," from the school board through community members.
2. "Determine whether your school or system is ready."
3. "Establish a development committee" composed of stakeholders.
4. Survey the community and assess educational strengths and unmet needs.
5. Set educational goals and objectives.
6. "Decide on a time line," allowing plenty of room for training, selecting committees, improving information access, and setting up new budgeting procedures.
7. "Decide on an approach for implementation," such as pilot programs in a limited number of schools, for the first year.
8. Train committee members.
9. "Implement the program."
10. Monitor, evaluate, and adjust as necessary throughout implementation.

11. Be prepared for and work to eliminate obstacles, such as too-high expectations, inappropriate "downsizing," some collective-bargaining agreements, inaccurate beliefs about equity, state initiatives, and skepticism from staff members.

It may be wise to establish a districtwide committee that oversees SBM councils "to assist and evaluate school-based committees on defined criteria, such as the performance of students, the degree of involvement of staff, parents and the community in school operations, financial performance and other appropriate measures," recommend Peter A. Walker and Lawrence Roder (1993).

Mutchler and Duttweiler give four recommendations to overcome barriers and implement SBM successfully: First, "school sites and districts must effect a transformation of authority" (establish new roles); second, "a systemwide culture must be developed that supports norms of collegiality and collaboration" (by having open communication, sharing, and a willingness to learn); third, "professional development must be provided so that staff at all levels can acquire new knowledge, skills, and attitudes"; and fourth, "the entire educational system must demonstrate commitment to shared decision-making" (a systemwide commitment, with a clear definition of the mission, goals, and outcomes).

Chapter 6

How Successful Is SBM?

Supporters of SBM claim the positive outcomes it brings about include gains in achievement, lower dropout rates, increased attendance, and reduced disciplinary problems. Hansen and Marburger (1988) have argued that SBM can only be considered successful if it helps to make schools more effective in helping students achieve. Similarly, Prasch believes that "the most telling evaluation of SBM will, in the long run, rest on the question of improved student achievement." Carl D. Glickman (1992) concurs: "Site-based innovations mean nothing if a school cannot determine if the efforts have had an effect on students."

Salem-Keizer Superintendent Homer Kearns said, "The entire focus of reorganization is based on the improvement of student learning. That is the key. The only reason for restructuring is so that we might do a better job of teaching kids, not to make the organization more comfortable."

According to David Peterson (1991), however, "establishing a relationship between school-based management and student performance is problematic" for several reasons. First, there is little quantitative research on the topic. Second, "factors other than SBM might account for any gains in student achievement made after instituting the reform." The issue is further clouded by the fact that researchers frequently fail to specify the extent of power redistribution in schools studied. Finally, the lack of a standard definition of SBM also muddies the waters. Peterson concludes that "research as a whole does not indicate that site-based management brings consistent or stable improvement in student performance."

Anita A. Summers and Amy W. Johnson (1995) examined twenty studies on the effects of SBM. "The results of SBM," they conclude, "appear to be some increased sense of empowerment and involvement of the stakeholders (though not uniformly so), and virtually no evidence that SBM translates into improved student performance."

According to David T. Conley (1993), the assumption that decentralization of decision-making will lead to improved academic outcomes may be

erroneous if accountability is not increased as authority is decentralized:

> In education, there is little evidence that wholesale decentralization for its own sake will necessarily or automatically lead to improved learning outcomes. What is absent from almost every plan for decentralizing decision-making is a concomitant increase in accountability to accompany enhanced authority to make decisions. Such accountability is critical to making decentralization work.

Arlen Tieken, director of education for the Lincoln County School District in Newport, Oregon, contended that

> SBM *does* make a difference, or has the potential to make a difference. If people are a part of a group that has some influence on decision-making, then they do assume some ownership for what happens as a result of that. That sense of ownership creates a more positive environment for instruction in the classroom. Basically, it's the old adage that people happy in their jobs do a better job. I think SBM does lead to improved student performance; we just haven't found a good way to measure it yet.
>
> SBM has to be based on the quality of instruction and the quality of our clients—our students and the community, or the results. And if we don't keep that in mind as our foremost reason for having SBM, then I think we are wasting a lot of people's time. It becomes less desirable to put a lot of effort and time into something that's just another management tool. It has to go back to the idea of quality and working toward improving instruction so that we can better serve our clients, who are the students and ultimately the communities in which they live and work.

Combining SBM with Instructional Innovations

"Improving school performance may be an unrealistic expectation for a *governance* reform that alters the balance of power within educational systems toward schools," Wohlstetter and colleagues explain (1994). "SBM is really a tool for achieving outcomes or some sort of end or high-performance organization, not an end in itself," said Wohlstetter (interview).

Still, the effect of any educational program on students cannot be ignored. When interviewed for this Bulletin, Wohlstetter explained that high-performing SBM schools have combined the governance reform of SBM with "a push toward innovating in the classroom":

> That combination is very important. Without it, SBM becomes a political reform whereby the council at the school site ends up spending its time deciding who is empowered and who isn't or issues such as who can use the copy machine instead of improving classroom practices.

> SBM must be combined with an overall push for curriculum and instructional reform. This gives some substance to the decisions the council is making. They can then focus on broader organizational issues such as how to structure your classrooms in ways that improve academic performance and make schools more interesting places to work.

Murphy also believes that "what is needed is a marriage between SBM and our most powerful conceptions of learning and teaching"; therefore, revisions in governance and organization must be "more tightly linked to revisions in curriculum and instruction."

SBM is a managerial technique that, if implemented correctly, gives those closest to the students the freedom to make decisions that lead to improved student achievement. The flexibility of SBM as a management system can fit the educational goals of individual schools perfectly. What must be remembered is that "because the children they serve are different, schools need to adopt different programs" (AASA and others). It is up to the stakeholders to evaluate student needs and find ways of matching resources to those needs.

Midgley and Wood conclude that SBM needs to be seen "as an *important process* for achieving substantive school reform" rather than an end in itself. And Darrel Drury and Douglas Levin (1994) suggest that SBM contributes to four "intermediate" outcomes, which in turn have the "potential" to lead to improved student achievement. The four outcomes are increased efficiency in use of resources and personnel, increased professionalism of teachers, implementation of curriculum reform, and increased community engagement.

Measuring SBM Success

Just because SBM is used as an effective form of governance does not guarantee that instructional reforms will be introduced. Teachers and administrators must make it a policy to conduct assessments and seek information, advises Glickman, to determine the effects of SBM on students:

> Effects do not necessarily mean test scores. They might mean exhibits, videos of student work, portfolios, attitudes and through samples, attendance rates, transitions to next levels of school and work, and so forth. Schools need to ask themselves what data currently exist or could be collected to assess the current teaching practices on students, as well as what information could be collected at a later time to assess progress of new efforts.... the school needs to be a center of action research.

Peter J. Robertson and colleagues (1994) argue that schools are more likely to implement curriculum and instructional reform if seven factors are

present. Together with checklists provided in the previous chapter, school officials can refer to these factors as benchmarks when evaluating the success of their SBM systems.

1. *Power*. "The school has significant influence over key decision areas and a greater range of stakeholders are actively involved in the decision-making process."

2. *Knowledge*. "More individuals participate with greater frequency in a broad range of professional development activities oriented toward building school-wide capacity for improvement."

3. *Information*. "A broad range of relevant information is disseminated both internally and externally and the school acquires information regarding stakeholder satisfaction."

4. *Rewards*. "Individual and school evaluation is based on performance in terms of goals or outcomes and rewards and/or sanctions are tied to performance."

5. *Instructional Guidance*. "There is agreement among staff regarding the instructional direction of the school, which is guided by a state or district framework and/or a school vision or mission."

6. *Leadership*. "The principal insures widespread involvement, shares information broadly, and takes on more of a managerial role, and a broader range of leaders emerges at the school."

7. *Resources*. "The school increases its resource base through the acquisition of outside funding and/or partnerships with the community."

From their study of twenty-five elementary and middle schools, Wohlstetter and Briggs concluded that the most successful SBM schools empower people at the school site to make decisions, train people at the school site for their new roles, provide information to guide decision-making, and reward people for performance.

When asked how to measure SBM success, Wohlstetter replied:

> It's hard to measure SBM in isolation. Isn't it unrealistic to expect that a change in governance will result in student achievement going up? You have to look at how the two interact. Are SBM councils effectively making decisions about how to improve classroom practice? Is technology being used in the classroom? Are such reforms as teaching for understanding being used? In other words, before I measured SBM success, I'd first want to know if the school site is making decisions that restructure classroom practice along those lines. After you're able to document that over time, then you can come in and ask, "Has it made a difference in achievement for students?" But you need both types of reform—governance and classroom innovation. It's unrealistic to think if you change the balance of power you're going to have higher test scores.

Recommendations and Conclusion

Schools cannot function optimumly without an open environment based on sharing and two-way communication. The philosophical beliefs on which SBM is based can help to stimulate school improvement. In summary, the essential ingredients for successful SBM implementation are ongoing district support, trust and support among staff members, professional-development training in leadership and management skills. Also important are education of stakeholders about SBM rationale and practice, new budgeting practices, a commitment to the time involved in startup and implementation from all stakeholders, access to information for decision-making, and communication among all stakeholders.

The following areas require further research in schools actually implementing SBM:

- the type and degree of decentralization needed to make a significant difference in school effectiveness
- the measures that should be taken to improve the effectiveness of decentralization
- how communication takes place in SBM programs and ways of improving interaction

According to Wohlstetter, SBM is well worth the time and commitment required:

> A part of SBM that appeals to me is that successful SBM schools all have unique culture or very strong community feeling that governs the school. SBM allows schools to become a community, to define their own personality. This is critical to a high-performing organization.
>
> If you look at private schools or magnet schools and ask what makes them good, the answer is that there's a "buy in" among staff, parents, and students to the vision of the school. The strong community feeling

> is facilitated by the ability of people at the school site to define their vision for the school and what makes them different from the school down the street. To tailor their programs, they need some budget and curriculum control, as well as some staffing control to be able to hire people who fit in with that vision, with that school personality and community. (Interview)

In the final analysis, SBM seems to be an excellent tool for creating successful school communities.

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